SONIC EDITIONS

Limited edition prints of iconic images.
Hand printed and framed to order,
from **£59** unframed or **£89** framed.

www.soniceditions.com/worldsoccer

6 INTERNATIONAL NEWCOMERS

World Soccer

GLOBAL FOOTBALL SINCE 1960

October 2018

SPAIN SPOTLIGHT

LA LIGA IN THE USA?

Battle for the soul of Spanish football

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

RED STAR'S RETURN

Belgrade back in the big time

TALENT SCOUT

STRIKING TALENT

9 young goalscorers to watch

Roberto FIRMINO

FROM SHY KID TO ANFIELD HERO

JOSE PEKERMAN // LUXEMBOURG // AUSTRALIA A-LEAGUE PREVIEW // SERIE A SQUADS

"Art of Football bring out
the beauty in the game's most
memorable moments" Copa90

"Art of Football capture classic
moments in a vibrant,
contemporary style" The Guardian

"Art of Football get it.
those split-second moments
are treasured memories and their
artwork captures them in a
classy and stylish way" Ball Street

"Art of Football's shirts capture
the vibrancy of the game
like no other" Dirty Tackle

"Art of Football - where the
beautiful game comes to life"
Hitesh Ratna, Editor, FourFourTwo

"The Art of Football team create
truly unique and authentic content
that is designed to emotionally connect
real fans to the biggest moments
in the game" Adidas Uk

Art-of-football.com

WorldSoccer
Global football intelligence since 1960

Contents

October 2018

FEATURES

22 Special feature
La Liga looks to the US

46 Player biography
Roberto Firmino

54 Coach profile
Jose Pekerman

THE WORLD THIS MONTH

People in the news...on and off the pitch

4 **In pictures**
10 **From the Editor**
12 **On the radar**
13 **Jim Holden** Embracing dual nationality
14 **Keir Radnedge** Nations League a success
16 **Jonathan Wilson** Front two back in vogue
18 **Brian Glanville** Grealish must move up
20 **Ins & outs** people on the move

HEADLINERS

26 **Diego Maradona**
28 **Keisuke Honda**
29 **Andre Onana**
30 **Luka Modric**
31 **Silvio Berlusconi**
32 **Red Bull Salzburg**
33 **Juan Carlos Osorio**

EYEWITNESS

34 **Luxembourg**
40 **Serbia**

TALENT SCOUT

52 **Up-and-coming forwards**

6 OF THE BEST

60 **International newcomers**

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

62 **Courage crowned champs**

RIVALS

82 **Nacional & Penarol**

Follow World Soccer online

FOOTBALL 24-7

Follow @worldsoccermag Like World Soccer Magazine

SAVE MONEY ON WorldSoccer
Exclusive subscription offer.
See page 8

World Service

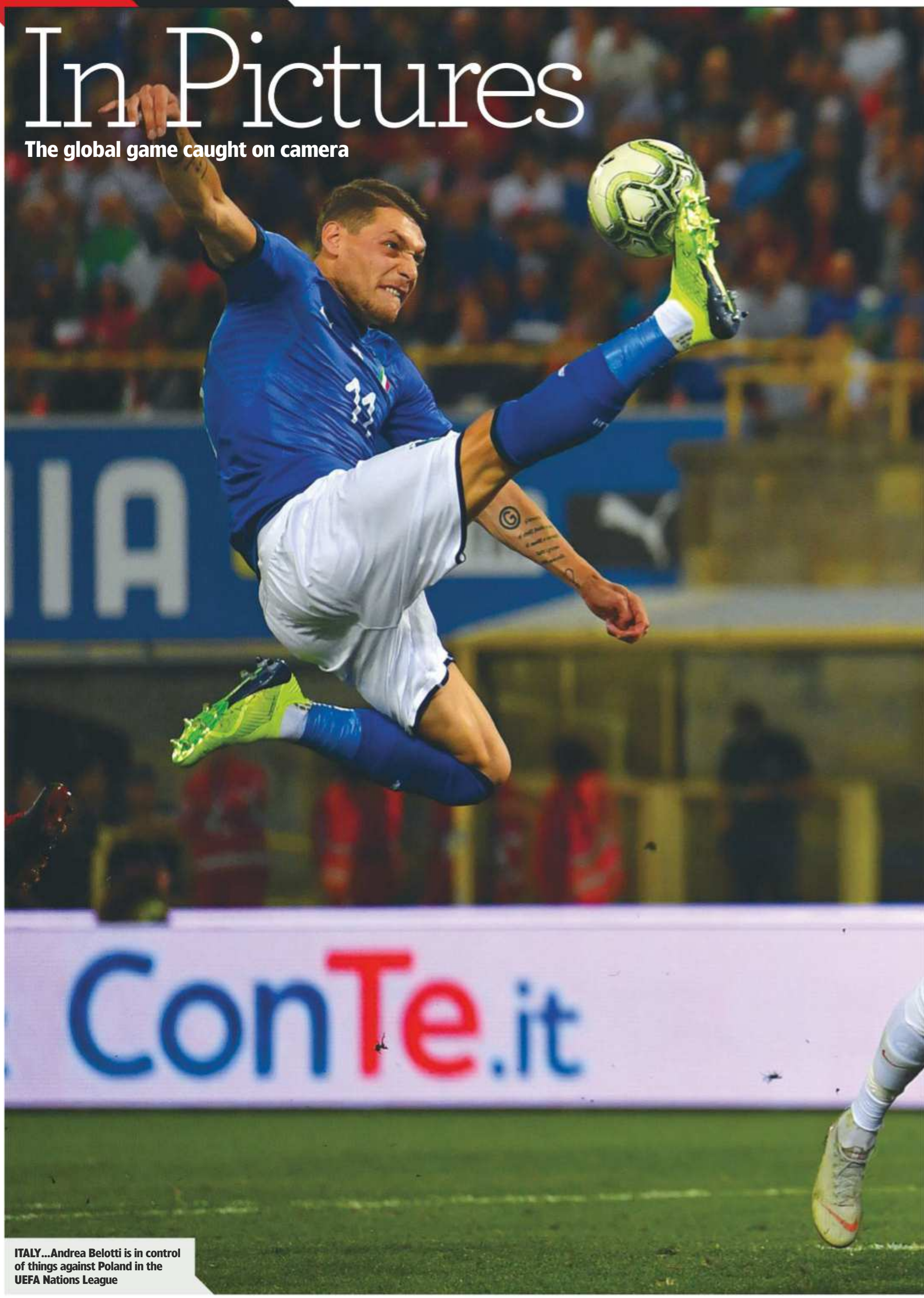
Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents

67 **Guinea-Bissau** Clubs go on strike
68 **Australia** A-League season preview
70 **Europe** The Nations League kicks off
72 **Africa** Champions League round-up

PLUS 66 Global diary 74 Results, tables, fixtures 80 Squads

In Pictures

The global game caught on camera



ITALY...Andrea Belotti is in control of things against Poland in the UEFA Nations League

CENTRO
3

HOLLAND... (from left) Fran Sol, Donis Avdijaj and Daniel Crowley of Willem II celebrate against Fortuna Sittard

BRAZIL...Nene of Sao Paulo is tackled by Flavio of Bahia

JAPAN...Daisuke Suzuki of Kashiwa Reysol has a beer with a fan after the J.League Cup quarter-final win against Ventforet Kofu

ENGLAND...Roberto Firmino of Liverpool is caught in the eye by Tottenham Hotspur's Jan Vertonghen

AUSTRIA...Thomas Goiginger of LASK Linz is held back by Austria Vienna's Christian Schoissengeyr (left) and Michael Madl

ARGENTINA...one Boca Juniors fan stands out in a sea of blue during their Libertadores Cup quarter-final against Brazil's Cruzeiro

Complete this coupon and send to: **FREEPOST TI Media Limited**
(No further address needed. No stamp required – for UK only)

YES! I would like to subscribe to World Soccer

Please tick your preferred payment method

- ☐ **UK Direct Debit, pay only £21.99 every 6 months, SAVING YOU 35% (full price £34.08)**
- ☐ 1 year Cheque/Credit or Debit Card (12 issues), pay only £47.49, saving 30% (full price £68.15)
- ☐ 2 year Cheque/Cash/Credit or Debit Card (24 issues), pay only £88.49, saving 35% (full price £136.30)

YOUR DETAILS:

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: Forename:

Surname:

Email:

Address:

Postcode:

Home Tel. No: (inc area code)

Mobile:

Date of Birth: D D M M Y Y Y Y

By submitting your information, you agree to our Privacy Policy available at www. ti-media.com/privacy/. Please keep me up to date with special offers and news from World Soccer and other brands within the TI Media Group by ☐ email, ☐ post, ☐ telephone and/or ☐ SMS. You can unsubscribe at any time.

I WOULD LIKE TO SEND A GIFT TO:

Please also fill out 'Your Details' opposite. To give more than one subscription, please supply address details on a separate sheet.

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: Forename:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

CHOOSE FROM 3 EASY WAYS TO PAY:

1. **CHEQUE**
I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to TI Media Limted for: £_____

2. **CREDIT/DEBIT CARD**
Please debit £ _____ from my:
☐ Visa ☐ Visa Debit ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex
Card No.
Expiry Date
M M Y Y

Signature: Date:
(I am over 18)

A Christmas card will be sent to all gift orders received by 10th December 2018 (either by email or post) so that you can send it on to the recipient before Christmas. If you supply an email address your order will be acknowledged by email and you will be given the option to download a Christmas card or request one by post. If you do not supply an email address you will automatically be sent a postal Christmas card.

3. Pay only £21.99 every 6 months by Direct Debit (UK only)

DIRECT Debit

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit.
Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

Name of Bank:

Address of Bank:

Postcode:

Name of Account Holder:

Sort Code: Account No:

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society Please pay Magazines Direct Direct Debits from the account detailed on this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Magazines Direct and if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

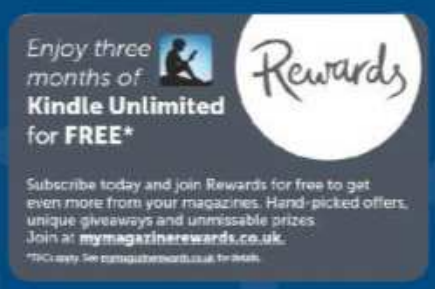
Signature: Date:
(I am over 18)

☐ Please keep me up to date with special offers and news just by email from carefully selected companies. Your personal details will not be shared with those companies - we send the emails and you can unsubscribe at any time. Offer open to new subscribers only. Direct Debit offer is available to UK subscribers only. *£21.99 payable by 6 monthly UK Direct Debit. This price is guaranteed for the first 12 months and we will notify you in advance of any price changes. Final closing date for all orders is Monday 4th February 2019. Orders purchased as a gift before the 10th December 2018 will start with the February 2019 issue published in January. All weekly titles will begin with the first available issue in January. All gift orders purchased after this date will begin with the first available issue. If you would like your gift subscription to start with an earlier issue please contact customer services. Orders purchased for yourself will start with the next available issue – please allow up to 6 weeks for delivery. All prices are discounted from the full subscription rate advertised in each title, include P&P and are correct at time of going to press. If the magazine ordered changes frequency per annum, we will honour the number of issues paid for, not the term of the subscription. Magazines Direct may cancel a subscription and provide a pro rata refund if it ceases to publish the relevant title for any reason. For full terms and conditions, visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. The Rewards scheme is available for all active print subscribers of magazines published by Magazines Direct, free of charge. Full terms and conditions are available at mymagazinerewards.co.uk. Digital subscribers also get access as long as the subscription has been purchased directly through the publishers at magazinesdirect.com. For enquiries please call: +44 (0) 330 333 1113. Lines are open Monday- Saturday 8am- 6pm UK Time or e-mail: help@magazinesdirect.com. Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone provider's call bundle.

XWS CODE: BZR8

Enjoy these great subscriber benefits:

- **Never miss an issue with delivery direct to your door**
- **Getting the magazine for less than you'd pay at the newsagent!**
- **Access to exclusive offers, giveaways and prizes with Subscriber Rewards**



0330 333 1113
Quote Code: BZR8
(Monday to Saturday from 8am to 6pm, UK time)
For overseas orders call +44 330 333 1113

THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFT!

Subscribe to World Soccer from only £21.99*

SAVE UP TO **35%**

Buy a subscription for yourself ★ Give as a gift this Christmas ★

Subscribe online at
magazinesdirect.com/BZR8

Complete the coupon opposite

THE DIRECT DEBIT GUARANTEE: This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits. If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit, Magazines Direct will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Magazines Direct to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request. If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by Magazines Direct or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society. If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Magazines Direct asks you to. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

FROM THE EDITOR

We may still be in the early stages of the season but already two important developments have taken place: the launch of UEFA's Nations League and the plans by Spain's Liga to stage matches in the USA.

The early signs are that the Nations League will provide a useful shake-up of the international calendar. It remains to be seen whether Europe's wealthiest clubs will be happy to make players available at more difficult stages of the season, but so far, so good.

The likes of Spain, Germany and France will always be big stories. But the format throws up lots of interesting new lines – not least Luxembourg (page 34), a country so long a whipping boy but now, thanks to the format, one with a realistic chance of qualifying for their first major finals.

> The early signs are that the Nations League will provide a useful shake-up of the international calendar

Naturally, La Liga's idea for a Stateside game (page 22) has been compared to the plans developed a few years ago by the Premier League for a 39th game. Opposition saw that proposal quickly mothballed, though the Liga plan is arguably more of a threat to football's natural equilibrium. Its opponents are numerous, so it would be a sad day for football if the latest plan manages to overcome such extensive opposition.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1 Germany wins Euro 2024 vote p10
2 Pekerman leaves Colombia p54
3 La Liga plans USA match p22
4 Modric wins UEFA award p30
5 Maradona takes job in Mexico p26
6 Berlusconi plots Monza takeover p31
7 Red Star return to Champions League p40
8 Kevin Beattie dies p21
9 Nations League gets underway p70
10 Australia's A-League kicks-off p68

Winner...UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin announces the result

SWITZERLAND

Germany wins Euro 2024 vote

Germany will host the 2024 European Championship finals after seeing off a bid from Turkey in a UEFA executive committee vote.

At a meeting in UEFA headquarters in Nyon, the committee voted 12 to four to back the German bid, which had been the favourite.

The decision marks a return to single-country hosting for UEFA after the planned pan-European tournament in 2020, when games will be staged at 12 cities across the continent, including Wembley Stadium, which will host the semi-finals and Final.

Turkey faced an uphill struggle to win support for its bid after a preliminary UEFA report raised concerns about several issues, including human rights and travel infrastructure.

In contrast, UEFA assessed the German bid as "comfortably meeting overall expectations when it comes to political aspects, social responsibility, sustainability and human rights".

ENGLAND

Mike Lee, a one-off

Mostly, journalists know how to see through the two-way mirror.

The communications man or woman should never become "the story". His/her role is to serve the client but keep journalists onside and sufficiently "in the know" to develop a level of mutual respect which will also serve the next

"I get everything you say and agree! No one's more frustrated with the lack of quality I've shown than me. I must do better! Your criticism helps me. Thank you"

Sporting midfielder Bruno Fernandes responds to fan criticism on Instagram

campaign, somewhere else in sport, somewhere else in the world.

That rare gift was one possessed to a remarkable degree by Mike Lee, the London-based communications specialist who has died after a heart attack at only 61.

Sunderland fan Lee was chairman of Vero Communications, which he founded in 2006 after helping London land the 2012 Olympic Games. His cv of success included further

Much missed...communications specialist Mike Lee

Olympic awards to Rio de Janeiro (2016), Pyeongchang (2018) and Paris (2024) as well as the 2022 World Cup to Qatar.

Director of communications at UEFA from 2000 and 2004, he was voted PR Professional of the Year in 2005 and was awarded an OBE in that year's New Year's Honours list.

He was never the story, which is just as it should be...until now, sadly.

Keir Radnedge

HEROES & VILLAINS

CRAIG GORDON

Responding to a recent tweet regarding a reckless challenge by Gordon that left him injured in 2016, Alloa Athletic striker Greig Spence revealed that the Celtic goalkeeper had "covered wages I lost" after the part-time plumber was "off work for three months".

JULIAN NAGELSMANN

At 31 years and 58 days, he became the youngest coach in UEFA Champions League history when he took charge of Hoffenheim's 2-2 draw with Shakhtar Donetsk in Ukraine.

Boss...Hoffenheim's Julian Nagelsmann

IKER CASILLAS

At the age of 37, Porto's former Real Madrid goalkeeper became the first player to appear in 20 Champions League seasons.

Saviour...Suwon keeper Shin Hwa-yong

SHIN HWA-YONG

The Suwon Bluewings goalkeeper saved three penalties against Jeonbuk Motors to earn the South Korean club a place in the AFC Champions League semi-finals. He saved Adriano's spot-kick in the final minute of normal time before going on to save a further two penalties in the shoot-out after the teams drew 3-3 on aggregate.

HUGO LLORIS

The World Cup-winning captain was banned from driving for 20 months and fined £50,000 after being found to be over twice the legal limit when stopped by police in London.

DOUGLAS COSTA

The Juventus player was banned for four games for spitting at and elbowing Federico Di Francesco of Sassuolo during a Serie A match.

Off...Douglas Costa is about to see red

CRISTIANO RONALDO

The Portuguese superstar was shown a straight red card on his Champions League debut for his new club Juventus, when he appeared to tug the hair of Valencia's Jeison Murillo.

SERGIO RAMOS

A yellow card against Roma in his side's opening Champions League game of the season made the Real Madrid captain the competition's most-booked player of all time, with 37 cautions. He is also the most booked player in La Liga and for the Spanish national side.

Poor discipline...Sergio Ramos collects another record

"I had an Aston Martin, the big house, anything a person could want – but you can't help what's in the brain"

Former Wales midfielder David Cotterill on his battle against depression

Nicolo BARELLA (Cagliari)

In need of all the young talent he can lay his hands on after the *Azzuri*'s failure to qualify for this summer's World Cup, new Italy coach Roberto Mancini has singled out the box-to-box midfielder as one of his building blocks for the future.

Sardinian born and bred, the 21-year-old was called up for the recent national squad and has looked the part in the last couple of Serie A seasons, winning admiring glances with his ferocious tackling, excellent range of pass and powerful shot from distance.

Last season he became Cagliari's youngest-ever captain – at 20 years, 10 months and nine days – and according to the rumour mill a number of leading Italian and English sides are hot on his trail, with Internazionale and Juventus thought to head the queue to bring him on board.

His one major fault is a lack of self-control and he picked up 13 yellow cards and one red card last term, the worst individual rap sheet in the top flight.

"Going in for tackles is the way I'm made, though I do have to improve those numbers," he admits. "I can't afford a yellow card every game."

Lucas PAQUETA (Flamengo)
The 21-year-old attacking midfielder made his debut in Brazil's recent friendly against the USA and is being tracked by a number of leading European clubs.

Arne MAIER (Hertha Berlin)
The 19-year-old Germany under-21 midfielder is already a regular for Hertha, who began the season in impressive style.

Ousmane DEMBELE (Barcelona)
The French youngster, whose first season at Barca was blighted by injury, has made a fine start to the new campaign. He has scored some impressive goals, including a spectacular long-range shot in the Champions League against Roma.

Hatem BEN ARFA (Rennes)
After 17 months on the sidelines, the former Paris Saint-Germain exile scored an injury-time winner on his debut against Jablonec in the Europa League.

Leandro TROSSARD (Genk)
The left winger earned his first call-up to the Belgium squad after an energetic start to the new campaign saw him pile up the goals and assists for his club.

GERVINHO (Parma)
The Ivory Coast forward, who is now back in Europe with Parma, scored an outrageous goal for his new club against Cagliari, running almost the entire length of the pitch before firing home.

Jim HOLDEN

AT THE HEART OF THE GAME

Dual nationality should be celebrated, not shunned

The bitterness of Mesut Ozil as he departed international football was summed up by one sentence in a strong statement of his discontent. "I am German when the team wins and an immigrant when it loses," said the midfielder who helped the country to victory in the 2014 World Cup.

Ozil was born and raised in Gelsenkirchen, and has always played with pride and honour for Germany. His family is of Turkish descent and he is fiercely proud of that, too. He is a man, in his own words, of "two hearts".

Many people have dual allegiance or dual nationality and it is a reality of modern life that football must confront this with reason and sensitivity, not brutal disdain.

The treatment of Ozil in Germany has been dispiriting to witness following an inflated controversy when he was pictured with Turkish president Recep Erdogan – not least in needlessly critical comments from former international team-mates Manuel Neuer and Toni Kroos. They should have known better than to fan the flames. So should Alex Miescher, the general secretary of the Swiss Football Federation, when he responded to the case of Granit Xhaka and Xherdan Shaqiri being fined for making eagle gestures of an Albanian national symbol to celebrate goals against Serbia at the World Cup this summer.

"This incident shows there is a problem," said Miescher. "We have to ask ourselves, do we want dual nationals?"

Xhaka was born in Basle, while his family are ethnic Albanians from Kosovo. Shaqiri's family have similar origins and moved to Switzerland before their son was a year old.

Their gestures were foolish and punished by FIFA. But they have "two hearts" as well, along with many others in the current Switzerland team, with family connections to Cameroon, Nigeria, Chile and Spain.

"We are all Swiss and we give everything we have," said Xhaka in response to the comments of Miescher. "We all know exactly what we owe to Switzerland. Dual nationals give their utmost for the Swiss team."

Simplistic and narrow-minded attitudes to this issue are old fashioned, unrealistic and wrong. Footballers with "two hearts" and dual nationality will only become more common.

Switzerland, for example, has 283,000 registered footballers, almost half of whom are of "foreign" origin.

England manager Gareth Southgate spoke recently about this aspect of team selection in his job, admitting: "The landscape is very complicated. The way the world is, families are quite transient, and nearly every player in the England under-15s and under-16s teams are dual nationality. This issue is something all countries are aware of."

> "Declan [Rice] is in a really difficult position now...he has to make a decision and I think it's important he is allowed space to do that"
> England manager Gareth Southgate

Southgate's approach is not to denigrate young players for their background, nor to question their pride and motivation in wearing a particular national-team shirt when they have "two hearts". His diplomacy and sensitivity is the way to go.

"It's incredibly complex," he adds. "We have always had players that have switched from youth level; we have seen the likes of Ethan Ampadu and David Brooks play for England and Wales in one summer.

"That landscape is there for everybody and you know that some decisions will fall in your favour and some will go the other way."

Both chose to play for Wales at senior level and Southgate now hopes to persuade West Ham United's Declan Rice to pick England rather than Republic of Ireland. But some in Irish football are furious about this – forgetting how many English players with "two hearts" have made the opposite move in the past. "Declan is in a really difficult position now and I'm extremely conscious of that," says Southgate. "He has to make a decision and I think it's important he is allowed space to do that."

They are wise and delicate words. Declan Rice can choose as quickly or as slowly as he wishes. If he is torn between two strong allegiances, he wouldn't be the first footballer in that position – and he won't be the last. WS

Decision...London-born Declan Rice has only appeared in friendly matches for Republic of Ireland so far

Keir RADNEDGE

THE INSIDER

Nations League: a qualified success

UEFA was delighted with the positive start to the Nations League. Fans, coaches and players quickly grasped the concept of leagues within leagues, while the competitive element ensured a significant upgrade from a catalogue of meaningless friendlies.

The creation of the Nations League also laid an added team-building significance across those friendlies which completed the international-break calendar in September.

Crowds were good, with a capacity 67,000 watching Germany share a goalless draw with France and 81,392 witnessing England lose 2-1 to a revitalised Spain.

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin says: "The World Cup showed that there is a huge appetite for national-team football. UEFA has always been aware of this and of the fact that national-team football needs more than biennial summer showcases.

"Supporters realise that most friendlies fail to deliver competitive and meaningful football. The relationship between club and national-team football needed rebalancing.

"That was the thinking behind the UEFA Nations League."

Of course, those two internationals in Munich and London would have pulled in the fans even as friendlies, but such non-competitive match-ups are rare. Also, whatever Ceferin may think about the popularity of national-team football, the majority of qualifying ties for both the World Cup and the European Championship are yawningly and repetitively unbalanced and recedingly attractive.

The Nations League launch can only have encouraged FIFA president Gianni Infantino in his ambition to develop the concept at a worldwide level, and he will be cheered on by Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay as the South American sides all fear a drop in income from the loss of lucrative friendly matches in Europe.

CONMEBOL's star trio like their European dates not just for the money but also for player availability. The fact that FIFA and the confederations accept this cross-borders concept without a fuss makes one wonder how Infantino can justify his opposition to the Spanish league airlifting a top-flight game to the United States.

Going stateside has long been a dream for La Liga president Javier Tebas in his aggressive quest to take on the Premier League in the international revenue-generating arenas. However, his preference for a Catalan derby between Barcelona and Girona in Miami has run up against opposition from fans and from captains of the other Spanish league clubs.

Ceferin is promoting an expansionist agenda for the European game which Infantino hopes to restrict. The latter claims: "I would prefer to see a big MLS game in the United States instead of a La Liga game in the United States. We have regulations that everyone follows. A proposal must be accepted by the respective associations, the respective confederations and FIFA, and there should be a special reason for it."

So it's alright for South American nations to play in Europe but not for European clubs to play in America?

Infantino might respond that Europe's big clubs already play lucrative summertime friendlies of their own in the United States. But even the lustre of these matches is starting to fade. US fans are not daft. They noted that many of the World Cup stars were absent on delayed holidays while their clubs were touring.

Value for money is essential in a highly competitive entertainment sphere; hence, coming full circle, the promising start made by the UEFA Nations League. Expect Infantino to press the worldwide concept, particularly bearing in mind his pursuit of re-election next spring. WS

> Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay all fear a drop in income from the loss of lucrative friendly matches in Europe

Full house... Germany (in white) were at home to France

Another case, another Bosman?

Challenge...CAS headquarters in Lausanne

Whatever the pretences of the sport's officialdom, football and the law share an uneasy existence. And 25 years on from the Bosman case, Belgium is once again the venue in a tussle for supremacy.

Two issues are at stake. The first is the right of the Swiss-based Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to act as supreme court for all issues involving sporting entities – from players to clubs to national associations to international governing bodies. The second is the right of FIFA and UEFA to enforce the use of CAS to resolve all disputes, ranging from doping to transfers to contracts.

In the Bosman case, Belgian courts considered themselves inappropriate to rule on an international dispute because the player wanted to move from a Belgian club to a French club. Hence the case eventually went to the European Court of Justice – and the revolutionary outcome whose effects are still being felt.

Since then, a handful of other cases have shaken the CAS peace but without disturbing its overarching monopoly on sport-linked right and wrong.

One such case concerned the speed skater Claudia Pechstein. Another involved the lower-league German club SV Wilhelmshaven, while a third was about the right of UEFA to enforce its financial fairplay regulations.

The latest case concerns a complaint by RFC Seraing and the investment fund Doyen Sports against a four-window transfer ban imposed by FIFA and upheld by CAS for the Belgian club's breach of a ban on third-party ownership.

Seraing and Doyen went to the civil courts, and the Brussels Court of Appeal ruled that the legality of CAS should be examined in relation to European law and the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as the "general prohibition on ordinary courts" which is a key clause in all football bodies' statutes.

FIFA and CAS have both derided the assessment which held that arbitration could exist only if real consent existed between the parties. CAS opined that this was merely an issue of semantics.

The dispute raises further questions. While CAS may "own" the right to judge sports issues, how can it claim jurisdiction over contract law concerning business operations? And how can football bodies who are happy to enforce broadcasting and media rights contracts object when they fall foul of the same legal strictures?

Seraing and Doyen may become lost to sight in a European legal labyrinth, but football should be aware that this case is but a straw in an ever-stronger wind. WS

WINNERS

SON HEUNG-MIN

By winning a gold medal at the Asian Games, the Tottenham Hotspur striker – along with the rest of the South Korea squad – is now exempt from military service.

KOSOVO

A 2-0 victory over Faroe Islands in the Nations League was their first competitive win since being admitted to UEFA in 2016.

CANADA

Set a new national record with an 8-0 win over US Virgin Islands in the CONCACAF Nations League.

LOSERS

CROATIA

Less than two months after reaching the World Cup Final they suffered their heaviest-ever defeat, losing 6-0 to Spain.

MARIO LEMINA

A £96,000 speeding fine for the Southampton midfielder was thought to be a record for a motoring offence in the UK.

DENIS GLUSHAKOV (left) & ANDREY YESHCHENKO

Dropped from Spartak Moscow's Europa League squad to face Rapid Vienna after "liking" an Instagram post by Russian actor Dmitry Nazarov mocking coach Massimo Carrera.

Jonathan WILSON

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

Front twos are back in vogue

For years it seemed that the strike-partnership was dead. Nobody played two up front any more, and there were increasingly few instances where it was impossible to think of one player without immediately imagining his partner: Keegan-Toshack, Rush-Dalglish, Cole-Yorke...

But while many teams these days prefer to play with a lone front man, there has been some attempts of late to find a second figure to add to the point of the attack. And, increasingly, that player is one who is normally employed out wide rather than through the centre.

Strike pairings were always a very British way of looking at the game; due, perhaps, to a distrust of midfield playmakers. In a country that for 30 years saw 4-4-2 as the one true way to play it's understandable that the forward unit should become boxed off from the rest.

But over the past 20 years the perception of a team being made up of just three outfield units has broken down to the point where a number of coaches profess to being frustrated by the use of simple designations of formation. They prefer to see each player as having a specific role within a greater whole.

For teams that like to press, and whose effectiveness relies on every player functioning as a single entity, that is reasonable enough – even if it is handy to use the old, slightly clunky designations of 4-2-3-1 or 3-4-2-1 to help conceptualise the basic distribution of players on the pitch.

Support...Raheem Sterling (no10) and Harry Kane on England duty

> It was impossible to think of one player without immediately imagining his partner: Keegan-Toshack, Rush-Dalglish, Cole-Yorke

Whatever the coach's preferred terminology, the tendency over the past couple of decades, with the occasional exception, has been for lone strikers to become universal players and not just scorers. Some are a combination of goalscorer and creator (David Villa, Sergio Aguero, Lionel Messi), others scorer and target man (Didier Drogba, Diego Costa, latter-day Cristiano Ronaldo) and some a combination of the two (Thierry Henry, early Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Andriy Shevchenko).

That, in turn, has changed how central defenders operate – in a back four, at least.

In the 1980s it was normal for the two central defenders to pick up a centre-forward each. Cover, if required, would come from a full-back tucking in because they rarely had wingers playing high up against them. With a lone centre-forward to handle, one central defender now does the marking, while the other sweeps up behind. That, in turn, liberates the full-backs to push forward, which is very much the modern way.

What this means, however, is that a lot of central defenders – although they have become more comfortable playing the ball out from the back – have lost the basic skills of defending. They are not used to having to mark tightly in open play or winning aerial battles, and this is a situation that is exacerbated for the elite clubs by the increasing economic gulf between themselves and the rest. The more the top clubs dominate possession, the less actual defending their defenders have to do.

And that means a side playing with two central strikers will be making one central defender operate outside their comfort zone and probably restrict the attacking movement of at least one of the full-backs.

In certain circumstances, because of the way the game has evolved, there can be an advantage to playing two forwards. But that leaves two questions for any coach minded to do so. Firstly, how can a second striker be found without leaving a shortfall elsewhere? And, secondly, which players these days can function as a second striker?

The answer to the first question appears to be that, unless you do what Liverpool have done with Mohammed Salah, and have a wide player drift inside in a 4-3-3 so that he effectively

Freedom...Arjen Robben (left) and Robin Van Persie

functions as a second striker, it's best done by using a back three. That's what Pep Guardiola has done at Manchester City when he wants to get both Gabriel Jesus and Aguero into the side, and what one of his great influences, Louis Van Gaal, did while in charge of Holland.

Deciding that his defenders struggled in individual battles, Van Gaal accepted the need to switch to a back three before the 2014 World Cup, explaining: "I believe in this system also because the covering over the pitch is fantastic. You have always triangles... always occupation of the width.

"I wanted [Robin] Van Persie, [Arjen] Robben and [Wesley] Sneijder as my creators. Then I changed because I found at the training sessions that they were not strong enough, not connecting well with each other."

His solution was to shift Nigel De Jong to a position in front of the back three and to pull Sneijder deeper rather than

Partners...John Toshack (left) and Kevin Keegan

using him as a number 10.

"I thought I needed him to put Van Persie and Robben free on the goalkeeper," added Van Gaal. "But they were good enough to do it because they liked the freedom I gave them."

Since then, England and Tottenham Hotspur have taken to playing a back three, with Harry Kane alongside another central forward. And in both cases the player chosen has, like Robben, been a rapid forward more used to playing wide: Raheem Sterling and Lucas Moura.

Perhaps the idea is that players used to attacking the space between centre-back and full-back from out to in can do the same from in to out. More likely though, it's simply a matter of pace.

After all, a team playing with two central forwards is unlikely to offer much in the way of attacking width and so an ability to run in behind the opposing rearguard becomes vital. WS

REPORTS WE COULDN'T MAKE UP

1 NEW RECORD FOR OLD-TIMER

At 51 years of age, George Weah became the oldest man to play international football – on the same day that his teenage son, Timothy Weah, was capped by the USA.

Weah senior, a former World Footballer of the Year, is now president of Liberia and he made a shock return to action as his country lost 2-1 to Nigeria in a friendly that had been arranged to mark the retirement of the number 14 shirt that he famously wore during his career.

Meanwhile, 18-year-old Timothy was in the starting line-up as the United States beat Mexico 1-0.

Golden oldie... George Weah (centre)

2 HARRY'S TOO HOT TO HANDLE

The man behind Watford's mascot, Harry the Hornet, resigned from the role after being strongly criticised by Crystal Palace manager Roy Hodgson.

Speaking before the two sides met at Vicarage Road in the Premier League this season, Hodgson took issue with what he called Harry's "disgraceful" provocation of Wilfried Zaha in 2016.

Zaha, who has been an unpopular figure with Watford fans since winning the decisive penalty in the 2013 Championship play-off, was mocked by the Watford mascot, who dived in front of him after the final whistle last season.

Harry, aka Gareth Evans, says: "I have officially stepped away from being the match-day mascot at Watford.

"My decision. Proud of what I have achieved, the memories made and the experiences I've had. I was privileged and now heavy hearted also. Love you Harry!"

Buzzing off...Harry the Hornet (right)

3 A DIFFERENT KIND OF DRAW

There were a couple of very odd pairings in a Scottish Challenge Cup third round draw – neither featuring a club from Scotland.

This season's competition is open to guest teams from the top tiers in Northern Ireland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland, as well as English clubs from the National League, which is one tier below the Football League.

Third-round pairings include Connah's Quay Nomads (Wal) v Coleraine (NI) and Bohemians (NI) v Sutton United (Eng).

4 BASIC ERROR

Bordeaux's Toma Basic is unable to play in his side's Europa League group games because the French club forgot to include him in their squad list.

Signed from Hajduk Split in August, the 21-year-old was the victim of what club president Stephane Martin called "an administrative error".

5 SOFA, SO GOOD

Holland's Wesley Sneijder ended his 15-year, 134-cap international career sat on a sofa, in the middle of the Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam, watching TV with his wife and family.

The 34-year-old midfielder played 62 minutes of his country's 2-1 victory over Peru and then returned to the pitch after the game had finished to watch pre-recorded messages from former team-mates and coaches.

On the box...Wesley Sneijder and family

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Talent...Aston Villa's Jack Grealish (right)

Forget Villa, England could use Grealish

Interesting to see that the talented midfielder Jack Grealish, still only 23, has signed a new contract with Aston Villa, till now his only club, with the proviso that if he wants to leave, then he can.

With natural inside-forwards, which he undoubtedly is, in such pitifully short supply for England it would surely be good for the player to move to the Premier League,where his talents would be recognised and a place in the international team well within his grasp, as arguably it might even be now.

Villa are most unlikely to be promoted this season and it would surely make sense to see him make the step up, however lucrative the contract he has with Villa.

James Maddison, reportedly desperate to play for England, is now showing the attacking form which suggests he is emphatically ready to do so. Coventry-born, he was signed from Norwich City in the summer and has made the transition to the Premier League with Leicester City with ease.

Form...James Maddison of Leicester City

> In the Premier League, Grealish's talents would be recognised and a place in the international team well within his grasp

One almost despairs of writing about the hugely precocious Phil Foden, the 18-year-old attacker condemned to sit on the Manchester City bench while a host of talented foreigners occupy the place that might be his in the top team.

Another, Ruben Loftus-Cheek, stays on the sidelines at Chelsea when, as we well know, he looked good enough for England when he briefly had his chances in the World Cup.

In that last World Cup, England did surprisingly well considering the players they deployed, but the goals they scored came all too often from set-pieces.

We can only hope that talented midfielders who are now in view can get their international chance sooner rather than later.

Deeney deserves an international chance

Should the now 30-year-old Troy Deeney be given a chance by England? Gareth Southgate has made it pretty clear that his effective but robust style would not suit his England team, but why not?

Harry Kane may have won the Golden Boot at the recent World Cup but half his goals came from penalties and, perhaps because he was carrying an injury, his latter displays in the tournament were somewhat ineffectual.

At Craven Cottage recently, Deeney seemed to terrorise the Fulham centre-backs who never began to subdue him.

Now that England have lost the pace and incision of Jamie Vardy, who has retired from international football, they surely need to replace him.

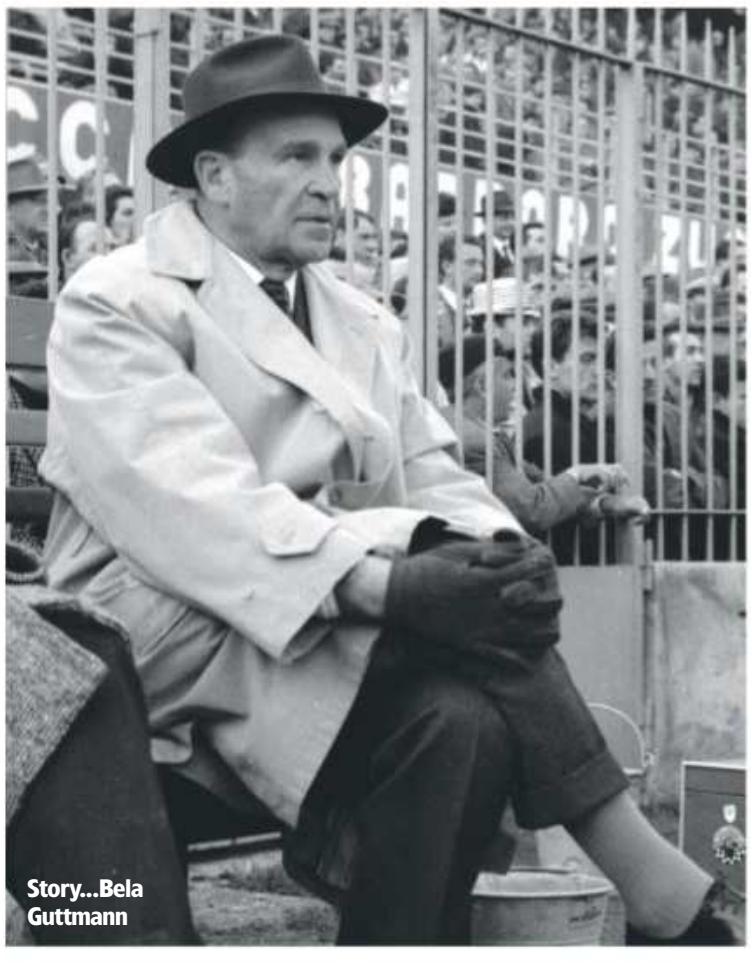
Southgate may have his view of an ideal way of playing football but one has not yet seen it work convincingly. We saw again at Wembley against Spain, even if they did have a valid goal ruled out at the end, how difficult England find it to score.

Does Deeney's robust and challenging methods not suit the national team's so-called style? But what is that style? The said reliance on dead-ball kicks is surely an implicit concession of tactical failure.

What, pray, does Danny Welbeck give to an England team, when this season he is finding it hard to get on the field for Arsenal?

"I would pick him," says Watford's former England keeper Ben Foster of Deeney. "He offers a different dimension." The former Walsall player shows self-discipline, too. With a special diet he lost a lot of weight during the close season.

Different... Troy Deeney



Story...Bela Guttmann

Managers, who needs them?

How much difference does a manager make with his presence in the dugout? Well, quite a lot it seemed when Manchester City, with Pep Guardiola banished to the stand, contrived to lose feebly at home to unfancied Lyon in the European Cup.

Mikel Arteta, who took over, was forced to watch his team subside against opposition which should have posed no great problem. Come the following Saturday, with Guardiola back in the dugout, City went to Cardiff City and thrashed them 5-0.

You can draw what conclusions you like from these two matches. Some might think they reflect a change towards the kind of psychological situation that has long happened in Italy, where managers are of such supreme importance, not least during a game.

This takes me many years back to a restaurant in Rome in 1955. Across the room where I was seated was a famous manager in Bela Guttmann, once a Hungarian international player, late to become enormously successful in Europe with Benfica.

He had just been sacked by Milan, although they were top of the league. And he told a droll and indicative story of what had happened some years ago when Lucchese, then minor players in Serie A, were on their way by train to Turin to confront the mighty Juventus.

En route, their manager took ill and died. How could they possibly play, not least against such fearsome opposition, without a manager? Desperately, they phoned all over Italy till at last a coach was found and he took his seat on the bench just in time for the kick-off.

Against all odds and expectations, Lucchese forced a draw and at the final whistle they carried the new manager off on their shoulders.

Lennon's revival is heartening

How pleasing to see Aaron Lennon excel on the left wing for Burnley. Now 31, and back after missing a season or so with psychological problems, he had a super World Cup for England in 2006, coming on twice as a substitute with coruscating success. He could still be of great benefit to an England team which alas plays without wingers.

The England manager Gareth Southgate happened to be watching Burnley's recent win against Bournemouth and, although he hadn't come to see Lennon, he must surely have realised that this is a player who could do England so much good.

Revived...Burnley's Aaron Lennon

Meanwhile, Theo Walcott has been in much improved form on the Everton wing since joining them from Arsenal.

Either or both of these players would surely improve an England team which has relied so heavily on set-pieces.

League Cup's small surprises

That superfluity, the League Cup, in its latest round did at least give us the occasional surprise.

In the third round at Old Trafford, Derby County beat Manchester United on penalties.

But I do wonder whether United would have succumbed had Paul Pogba been on the field rather than watching from the stand.

● Read Brian Glanville's weekly online column at worldsoccer.com

"They are starting to run football. They are certainly sucking tons of money out of football"

West Ham United co-chairman David Gold is no fan of agents

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

IN

Buddies boss... Oran Kearney

Czech mate... Jaroslav Silhavy

EUROPE

Ivorian midfielder **YAYA TOURE**, who left Olympiakos in 2006, returned to the Greek side after being released by Manchester City in the summer.

ORAN KEARNEY quit Northern Irish club Coleraine to take over from Alan Stubbs as boss of Scottish side St Mirren. Kearney was replaced by Dungannon Swifts manager **RODNEY McAREE**, whose job went to **KRIS LINDSAY**.

JAROSLAV SILHAVY was named Czech Republic coach. He replaced Karel Jarolim, who left his position after a 5-1 loss to Russia in a friendly.

ZORAN VULIC returned to Hajduk Split for a fifth spell as coach.

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentinian World Cup winner **DIEGO MARADONA** took charge of Mexican second-tier side Dorados de Sinaloa.

Colombian **JUAN CARLOS OSORIO**, who led Mexico to the last 16 of this summer's World Cup, was named coach of Paraguay.

CONCACAF

Former Manchester City and QPR defender **NEDUM ONUOHA** joined MLS side Real Salt Lake.

PAULO WANCHOPE was appointed coach of Costan Rican club side Herediano for a second time.

AFRICA

Ex-national skipper **DANIEL COUSIN** was appointed coach of Gabon.

Assistant... Michel Salgado

Former Spain and Real Madrid right-back **MICHEL SALGADO** was named assistant to Egypt coach Javier Aguirre.

ASIA

GUUS HIDDINK was put in charge of China's under-21 side with the aim of taking the team to the 2020 Olympics.

VITAL BORKELMANS was appointed Jordan coach, while **SRECKO KATANEC** took charge of Iraq and **GARY WHITE** left Chinese Taipei for Hong Kong.

Spain striker **ALVARO NEGREDO**, who won the Premier League with Manchester City in 2014, joined UAE side Al Nasr.

Back... Ricardo Gomes

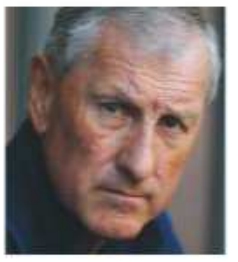
Gomes swaps Brazil for Bordeaux

RICARDO GOMES left his role as sporting director at Brazilian side Santos to replace Gus Poyet as coach of Bordeaux. The South American previously led the French side to League Cup success in 2007.

Poyet was suspended by Bordeaux after publicly criticising the club's transfer policy. The Uruguayan was reported to be unhappy at the sale of forward Gaetan Laborde to Montpellier.

"He was my hero and my inspiration. You try to model yourself on him but it was impossible – he was the complete footballer"

Former England captain Terry Butcher on Kevin Beattie



Appointments, sackings and loans

EUROPE

Former Italy striker **FABRIZIO RAVANELLI** resigned as coach of Arsenal Kiev after just three months in charge of the Ukraine side.

Guingamp and Guinea striker **ABDOUL CAMARA** was forced to retire aged 28 due to a heart condition.

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentinian coach **JOSE PEKERMAN** stepped down after six-and-a-half years in charge of Colombia.

CONCACAF

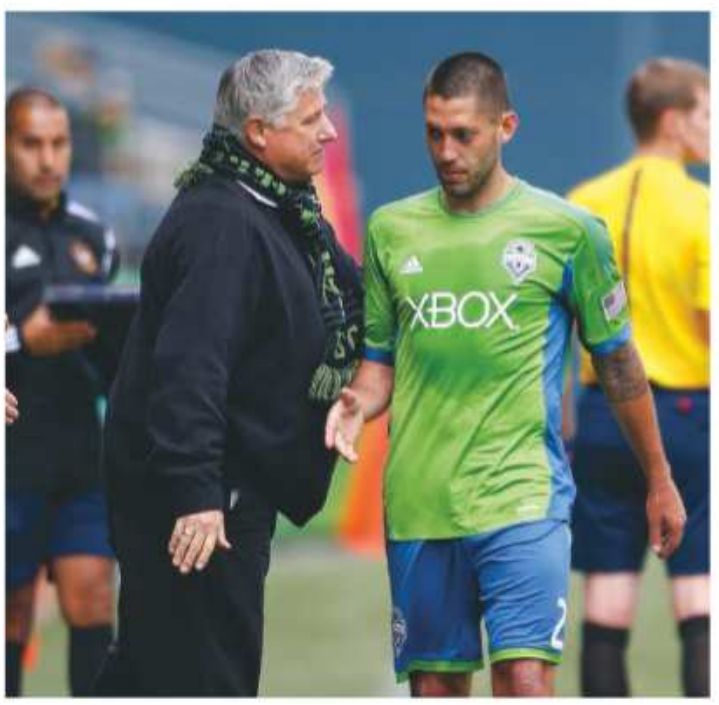
In MLS, **SIGI SCHMID** stepped down as boss of LA Galaxy, San Jose Earthquakes fired Swedish coach **MIKAEL STAHRE** and Vancouver Whitecaps sacked **CARL ROBINSON**.

Seattle Sounders' **CLINT DEMPSEY**, who is the USA's all-time joint-top scorer with 57 goals, announced his retirement at the age of 35.

AFRICA

Cameroon captain **BENJAMIN MOUKANDJO**, who plays in the Chinese Super League, retired from international football after national coach Clarence Seedorf said "good young players don't compete in China or in Asia".

Left...Fabrizio Ravanelli



Off...Sigi Schmid (left) and Clint Dempsey

OBITUARIES

Thrashed...scoring against Scotland

Kevin BEATTIE (1953-2018)
Despite being described by former national boss Bobby Robson as "the best English player he had ever seen", injuries restricted the defender to just nine international appearances for his country, scoring his only goal in a 5-1 thrashing of Scotland in May 1975. An FA Cup winner with Ipswich Town, he was also widely recognised as their best player of all time.

Born in Carlisle, the 15-year-old Beattie was invited down to Liverpool to meet manager Bill Shankly, but when nobody from the club turned up to meet him at Lime Street station the youngster turned round and caught the first train home – an outcome that the Anfield boss later admitted was as one of the biggest mistakes of his career.

Liverpool's loss was, however, Ipswich's gain, and after making his debut for the Portman Road side at 18 he went on to play more than 300 games for the club. A member of the side that beat Arsenal 1-0 in the 1978 FA Cup Final, he missed the 1981 UEFA Cup Final through injury but was later presented with a winner's medal in 2008.

His last game for Ipswich was an FA Cup semi-final against Manchester City in April 1981 during which he broke an arm. He retired at the age of 28 after five knee operations in four years, making a very brief comeback with Colchester United, Middlesbrough and a couple of Scandinavian sides.

He was later employed in the media and worked for BBC Radio Suffolk up until his death.

Jim BROGAN (1944-2018)
Described by Celtic as an "unsung hero", the defender made 341 appearances for the club, winning 14 trophies and playing in seven of their nine-in-a-row Scottish championship sides. He was also in the team that lost to Feyenoord in the 1970 European Cup Final.

He won four caps for Scotland during his 12 years in Glasgow and later had spells with Coventry City and Ayr United.

Unsung hero ...Jim Brogan

SPECIAL FEATURE

BATTLE FOR THE SOUL

WORDS: Side Lowe

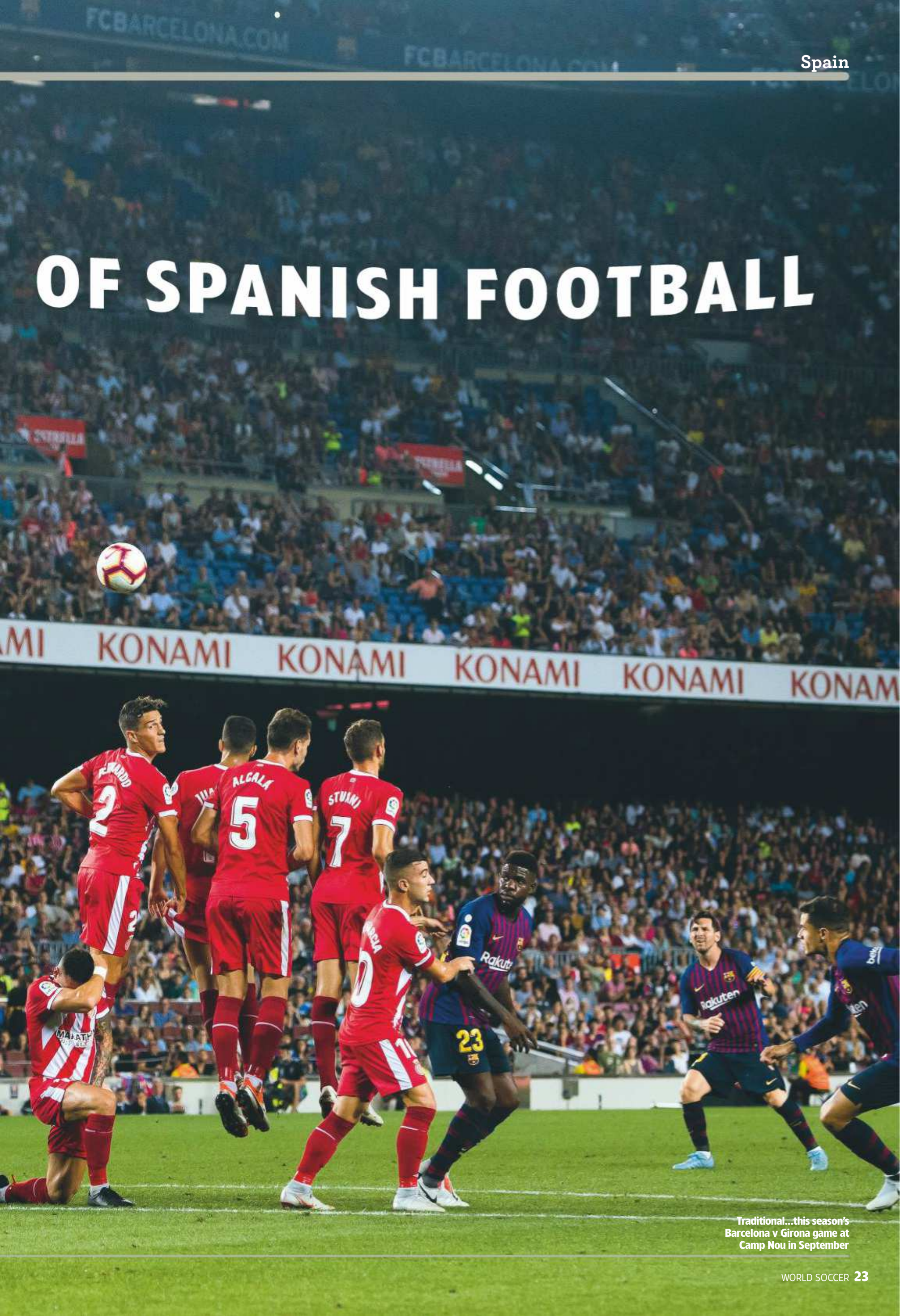
La Liga president **Javier Tebas** is facing mounting opposition to his plan to play a league match in the USA

There are 106km between Camp Nou and Montilivi, but when Barcelona play their away game against Girona in January the journey could be a lot longer – for both teams. Instead of an hour's drive north, Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez, Philippe Coutinho and co will board a plane and fly 7,555km across the Atlantic – at least they will if Javier Tebas gets his way.

The president of La Liga wants to take one game per season to Miami, and this season the chosen match is Girona versus Barcelona.

The two clubs have formally written to request permission to do so, and the league is pushing hard, seeking to convince the various stakeholders who they had previously ignored. They have an agreement in place to stage the game at Miami's Hard Rock Stadium ▸

OF SPANISH FOOTBALL



Traditional...this season's Barcelona v Girona game at Camp Nou in September

but whether that agreement will be upheld and permission granted – seemingly a foregone conclusion at first, with hardly any problems even contemplated by the league – is another matter. Tebas rates the chances at 90 per cent, but that may be optimistic.

Spanish Federation (RFEF) president Luis Rubiales, whose battles with Tebas are a central feature of Spanish football, says that the agreement means "nothing" without their say-so as it is the federation that has the power to authorise the game, not the league. And he's not keen, arguing that Tebas "has signed a deal that is not up to him to sign".

For the game to go ahead it would also need authorisation of the Spanish and US football federations, and then there are the legal doubts as to whether Spanish sports law, which governs all professional competition, would allow for a game to be taken out of the national territory and whether that law would still apply if it is. As for Gianni Infantino, the head of FIFA has expressed his discomfort with the idea of taking football into another FIFA territory, prompting Tebas to tweet: "I'll remind him that there are Canadian teams playing in the US."

La Liga has signed a deal with Relevent, a sports events company belonging to Stephen Ross, the owner of the Miami Dolphins and the Hard Rock Stadium. That 15-year deal outlines a programme designed to increase La Liga's presence in the US market, which includes plans to stage at least one regular league game a season – in the first few seasons, at least.

> "He has signed a deal that is not up to him to sign"
> **Luis Rubiales on Javier Tebas**

And Relevent are determined that the game in question should involve Real Madrid or Barcelona.

"If the NFL and the NBA do it, why wouldn't the league?" offers Tebas. But the NBA and NFL are not the same as a major European league – in terms of structure, fan base, culture or reach – and while the initiative was initially received as a fait accompli, it has encountered opposition; not least because of the way that it was handled.

"Tebas has spoken to everyone except the people he had to speak to," Rubiales complains. "It's a total lack of respect. I have not had a single call to say 'this is what we're doing'."

In his defence, Tebas drew up an eight-point list. And perhaps the most startling point was that the agreement with Relevent did not oblige La Liga to play a game a season in the US – it only obliged them to try.

They are trying, that's for sure, but there are a number of issues with the plan – beyond the doubts that exist over whether taking a single game to the US will make a significant difference to the league's standing and brand in the US.

Home...Girona fans get behind their team

For example, does one game attended by, say 60,000 people, between two teams that won't return for another 12 months, genuinely alter the landscape?

No evidence has been presented to show the benefits, beyond the deal itself, or the projected growth and impact. Are there not more pressing concerns to address first – including the unavailability of Spanish games on US TV and the frankly poor production values of the international product?

There are other concerns, of course, and some outright opposition.

Not only is there a determination for the game to be Real Madrid or Barcelona, it would also be one of their away games – in other words, it is unacceptable for them to lose a home game but not for another club to do so. This has only reinforced the idea that teams in Spain are not treated equally.

Tebas insists that the US game is just one of 380 played a season and suggests that those who raise questions about the integrity of the competition itself are overly puritanical. However, with the clubs chosen obliged to embark upon a 15,000km round trip, is it fair that Barcelona, in this case, should play an "away" game in a stadium likely to be packed with fans supporting them?

Determined...Javier Tebas says his plan is vital for the Spanish game

The future...Real Madrid and Barcelona met in a friendly at Miami's Hard Rock Stadium in 2017

"Every team should play every team in the same stadiums," says Real Madrid coach Julen Lopetegui.

The clubs themselves were already on board, but the players and supporters are a different issue.

The league, whose concern for match-going fans is conspicuous by its absence, and who insist that international fans – in reality, customers – have the same right to watch their teams as those in Spain, has sought to address some of the issues.

A series of meetings were held, aimed at convincing those affected, including with the players' union, to whom they promised financial support and a trip to the US for a their bi-annual project to find clubs for out-of-work footballers.

The players' union have threatened to strike over the issue and a handful of Barcelona players were vociferous in their objections, although that felt like largely empty posturing, maybe even opportunistic, and the offer certainly pacified, softening the tone, even if not

offering a definitive solution.

The league privately wrote to international – not domestic – fans asking them to make a public declaration of support for the plan, while a generous compensation package was proposed to Girona supporters.

Some 1,500 free tickets were offered to fly supporters out to Miami for the game. They would have to go there and back – a €500 deposit was designed to make sure they returned – although if they wished to stay for two days they could pay €450. Those who could not go to the USA could take one of 5,000 tickets for the Barcelona-Girona game at Camp Nou. For those that did neither, there was a refund on their season ticket of up to 40 per cent.

Progress was made, but still there are obstacles. A spokesman for the Barcelona board said that the players had come to understand it and accept it. Two days later, though, Jordi Alba said that no one had said anything to him.

Privately, many footballers are concerned. Fans still oppose it. Mostly, the media has been in favour.

And as debate continued, another issue emerged: politics.

Girona versus Barcelona was seen by many as likely to become a political platform for Catalan independence. Barcelona have often been seen as a flagship of Catalan identity and Girona, home of former president Carles Puigdemont, is one of the most determined pro-independence cities in Catalonia. By taking the game to the US any political display could be prevented – indeed, it may be worth asking if that was a deliberate ploy in the first place.

Tebas was a member of far-right political party Fuerza Nueva in his youth and is a man who has declared his desire to see a "Spanish Le Pen". He is a vociferous opponent of Catalan independence and has said that he is determined to prevent this game becoming a political demonstration. Yet according to some reports, doing so involves a plan that appears somewhat political in itself. Any manifestation of Catalan identity, including colours, shirts and flags will be banned; 40,000 Spain flags will be handed out prior to the game; and the teams will stand for the Spanish and US national anthems.

> "Every team should play every team in the same stadiums"
> **Real Madrid coach Julen Lopetegui**

Opposition... Luis Rubiales

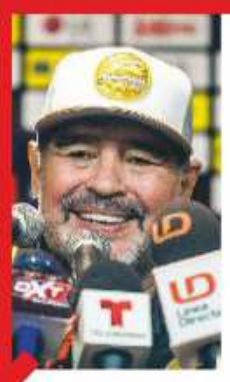
That may be an issue for closer to the time. For now, the league has to get the go-ahead for the game – and that won't be easy. The secretary of state for sport said that she was unsure about the proposal and asked for dialogue.

Had there been consultation, it might all have run more smoothly, with minimal confrontation. But it is too late for that now. For Rubiales, this may be an opportunity to short-circuit Tebas and to flex the federation's muscles.

There are also, he insists, bigger issues and questions of principle – even if that does sound somewhat jarring just six weeks after he took the Spanish Super Cup to Morocco. The RFEF has a decision to make and they must do that by January 5 – although the promise is to do so sooner – and it is hard to see how they can back down without losing face.

"The FIFA president wants to protect domestic competitions and taking competition somewhere else is an invasion of that country," says Rubiales. "A friendly is not the same as a game in the domestic league.

"This is what the FIFA president said and that has to be respected." WS



Diego Maradona

Seeking a rebirth in Mexico's second tier

Success...celebrating against Cafetaleros de Tapachula

Acknowledgement... coach and players thank Dorados' fans

A second-tier club based in Sinaloa, home to one of Mexico's most powerful drug cartels, may not be the most obvious place for Diego Maradona to relaunch his coaching career. But the 57-year-old Argentinian insists he can bring success to Dorados de Sinaloa while restoring his own tarnished reputation at the same time.

Dorados play in Culiacan, the capital of Sinaloa state in north-west Mexico that is home to the Sinaloa Cartel, who are described by American intelligence as "Mexico's most powerful organised-crime group".

During his playing career, Maradona was dogged by allegations of cocaine addiction and links to the mafia, notably in Italy when he was with Napoli.

"I made a lot of mistakes in my life," Maradona admitted at his first press conference in Mexico. "I want to give Dorados what I lost when I was sick.

"I was sick for 14 years. I was just consuming myself. Now I want to see the sun, I want to go to bed at night. I never even used to go to bed. I didn't even know what a pillow was. That's why I accepted the offer from Dorados."

Hiring Maradona was the brainchild of Jorge Alberto Hank, the son of Jorge Hank Rhon, who is a former mayor of Tijuana and the son of the late Carlos Hank Gonzalez, one of Mexico's wealthiest men. The family also owns top-flight side Club Tijuana.

"I spoke with him [Maradona], explained to him what it was about, who we are and where we want to go. I felt that he was convinced and determined," said Jorge Alberto Hank. "It is not a circus, it is about a sporting challenge. We want Dorados to earn its promotion."

After obtaining a work permit via a trip to Guatemala, Maradona insisted Dorados would have his full attention.

"I am here to work," he says. "I am here to give my heart like I did in Fujairah [in United Arab Emirates], where I drove 300km a day to work.

"We are not here for a stroll. We didn't come on vacation, we came to work...it will be great to win together."

It remains unclear how Maradona will fulfil his responsibilities to Dynamo Brest, the Belarusian club who appointed him chairman after he left the UAE in April.

Since coaching Argentina at the 2010 World Cup, Maradona has also held positions at UAE side Al Wasl and Deportivo Riestra, a lower-tier club in Buenos Aires.

"We are going to look to win games, as I do not like to play defensive football," adds Maradona. "When I took drugs it made me go backwards, it was a step back, and what football players have to do is go forward."

> "When I took drugs it made me go backwards, it was a step back, and what football players have to do is go forward"

The early signs are promising and Dorados won their first game under his stewardship, 4-1 against Cafetaleros de Tapachula, with Ecuadorian striker Vinicio Angulo scoring a hat-trick.

But controversy is unlikely to ever be far away. The following day Maradona clashed with the media, demanding privacy after he was filmed having lunch.

John Holmesdale

Greeting...on his first day at training

Keisuke Honda

Japan ace takes on two roles...in Australia and Cambodia

Keisuke Honda wears two watches. One tells Tokyo time and the other wherever he happens to be. Always capable of doing things differently on the pitch, he is even more unpredictable off it.

Honda announced his retirement from international football this summer after his third World Cup and there was plenty of speculation that the attacker would do the same with his club career as his contract with Pachuca of Mexico was expiring. After all, the 32-year-old has always suggested that he thinks there is more to life than football, what with his venture-capital fund with actor Will Smith and ambassador positions with the United Nations.

However, the man who surprised everyone in 2009 by joining CSKA Moscow – when there was plenty of interest from far bigger clubs thanks to an impressive three seasons in Holland with VVV Venlo – signed a two-year deal with Melbourne Victory in August. The biggest club in the A-League now boasts its biggest star and Honda will, once the season starts in October, be expected to produce on and off the pitch as a "marquee" player who is paid outside the league's salary cap.

"I was thinking to quit my career after the World Cup, but luckily this club made me a great offer that changed my mind," says Honda, laying on the praise for Victory boss Kevin Muscat.

"I changed my mind after I spoke to Kevin directly. He said to me he really wants to succeed as a club. He's an ambitious person and I'm an ambitious person as well, so I was inspired by him."

But perhaps not quite enough as Honda then took another job: a coaching role with Cambodia's national team.

Quite what his job entails has yet to be defined. General manager seems to be the preferred title, although some parts of the Japanese media have him as "shadow coach" – the non-qualified player making the decisions behind the official boss Felix Gonzalez. After all, Honda has no coaching licences and is unpaid – otherwise he would be in violation of Asian Football Confederation regulations that prohibit anyone from earning two salaries from different member associations.

Yet on September 10, when Cambodia hosted Malaysia in Phnom Phen, it was Honda who seemed to be in the driving seat. In the pre-match press conference, there he was giving his thoughts on the approaching game, explaining: "I want to contribute all my experience to the Cambodian national team. My mission is to change Cambodian football right now... but of course that's not easy."

On the day of the game, Honda lined up in the coach's position in the dugout. He was soon standing on the sideline, wearing a huge smile thanks to a stunning volley from Souey Visal that sent 50,000 fans wild – national-team attendances in the Cambodian capital are consistently impressive and passionate – and put the hosts ahead.

Cambodia, however, couldn't keep Malaysia out and ended up losing 3-1.

"They did what was expected of them in the first 30 minutes, but improvements need to be made as a game lasts 90 minutes," said the Cambodian "general manager" after the game. "I am to blame for the loss and will try to figure out why the team lost."

He will be doing that on the long journey down under as he now focuses on his new club. Honda has said that he will head to Cambodia when his club schedule allows, but it remains to be seen how often that is.

The Australian A-League starts on October 20 – which is just five days after Cambodia are due to play Singapore, and it is unlikely that the Melbourne club will allow their main man to head north so close to the big kick-off.

Honda will also be busy in November when Cambodia participate in the 2018 AFF Championship, which is Southeast Asia's biennial big bash and is a major deal in the region. There has been talk of him helping out remotely, although quite how that will work is unclear.

As is pretty much everything about the whole set-up...

Honda's two hats could hardly be more different – and it looks like he is now going to need three watches.

John Duerden

> "I was thinking to quit my career after the World Cup, but luckily this club made me a great offer that changed my mind"
>
> **Honda on joining Melbourne Victory**

In charge... Keisuke Honda (second right) issues instructions during Cambodia's friendly with Malaysia

Andre Onana

Cameroonian keeping the faith at Ajax

African keepers are a rare commodity in the European game and even more so in the Champions League. But if Ajax are to make an impact on their return to the group phase of the competition then Cameroon's Andre Onana could be key.

The Dutch club's decision to turn down an approach from Marseille came as a huge relief to their supporters as Onana is a cult hero in the Amsterdam Arena; not only for his performances but also his sprints across the pitch to join in goal celebrations, his antics in the box and an easy charm off the field with the fans.

Even though the 22-year-old is not first choice for his country and has turned down recent call-ups, he is bearing a bright torch for his continent.

"My fighting mentality has really grown," says Onana. "When the season started it was different, but now I'm stronger, especially in my head. Now I want to win everything."

Onana has proved to be good business for Ajax, who paid Barcelona a paltry €250,000 for his services in 2015, asserting himself to be a capable successor to Jasper Cillessen, who moved in the opposite direction.

The keeper then further endeared himself to his new club by turning down a call-up to play for Cameroon at the African Nations Cup in Gabon in 2017, putting club above country and risking his future with the Indomitable Lions.

That decision cost him a gold medal, but surprisingly it did his future international prospects no harm as he returned to the Cameroon squad as understudy to his cousin Francis Ondoa for the Confederations Cup in Russia last year and now has four caps.

Ondoa and Onana were both at the Samuel Eto'o Academy in Douala and shared a room for five years before both headed for Barcelona.

> "It was fantastic but I spoke no Spanish and I was very young. I cried in the beginning but I got stronger"
>
> **On moving to Europe at 14**

"It was fantastic but I spoke no Spanish and I was very young. I cried in the beginning but I got stronger," admits Onana, who was 14 when he moved to Europe. "As a keeper, it's important to be calm and that I am. But in my personal life I'm a joker. I can't sit with people who don't know how to laugh."

From Nkol Ngok, near Yaounde, he continues: "In my neighbourhood, nobody wanted to be a keeper. Everyone wanted to score.

"The coach said I must take a turn in the goal and I moved quicker to do it than I had intended because everyone else was reluctant. That's how it started."

Marseille's interest in Onana has been long term, with technical director and former Spain keeper Andoni Zubizarretta a big admirer.

However, with an eye on restoring lost lustre when they compete in this season's Champions League, Zubizarretta's opposite number at Ajax, Marc Overmars, says they will not sell the African keeper "not even for pots of gold".

Mark Gleeson

Luka Modric

Croatia and Real Madrid midfielder is UEFA's player of the season

It's been quite a year for Luka Modric. After winning a third successive Champions League title with Real Madrid and playing a crucial role in Croatia's passage to the World Cup Final, the midfielder was voted UEFA's Player of the Year, ahead of Cristiano Ronaldo and Mohamed Salah.

Modric received 313 points in a poll of journalists and coaches – 90 more than Ronaldo and 199 ahead of Salah.

Surprisingly, Lionel Messi was not among the final three, despite Spanish Liga success with Barcelona. But Modric's performances at the World Cup, where he was voted the tournament's best player, proved to be critical.

Modric's victory broke the stranglehold on individual awards that Messi and Ronaldo have held over the past decade.

> "It's been the best year of my career. I'm just enjoying the moment. It's all a bit of a blur"

UEFA had expected Ronaldo to attend the ceremony, flying in by helicopter from his new home in the hills outside Turin. But when he learned earlier in the day that he had not won he opted to stay away. Ronaldo's agent Jorge Mendes only learned of his client's hissy fit during the ceremony at Monaco's Grimaldi Forum, prompting the Portuguese entourage to leave halfway through in protest.

Mendes later claimed that Modric's victory was "ridiculous... shameful...the winner is not in doubt, as Ronaldo is the best in his position".

No-show...on learning that he hadn't won, Cristiano Ronaldo didn't turn up

Juventus director Giuseppe Marotta also complained that Ronaldo deserved the award for his success in leading Real Madrid to another Champions League title, his fourth in five years.

"The no-show was a personal decision of Cristiano, which we want to respect," said Marotta. "Our criticism concerns a deep bitterness for this decision because the award refers to the Champions League and not to the World Cup and I believe that Cristiano Ronaldo has given the best emotions of the last edition and also fantastic goals."

But Marotta was wrong to claim that the award did not cover performances in the World Cup. Votes were cast in late July and early August, with voters encouraged to consider events in the entire 2017-18 season, including the World Cup, where Ronaldo's Portugal lost to Uruguay in the last 16.

The bitterness from Ronaldo's camp was in stark contrast to Modric, who accepted his award with humility.

"Everything has happened so fast over the past few months," he said. "After winning the Champions League with Real Madrid, then achieving the historic result with Croatia, and now this.

"It's amazing. It's been the best year of

Awards... with UEFA Player of the Year and UEFA Midfielder of the Season trophies

my career. I'm just enjoying the moment. It's all a bit of a blur.

"Maybe in the future I'll be more aware of what has happened. I never like talk about myself, I'd rather let others do that."

No mention was made of Modric's legal troubles at home, where he has been charged with perjury in relation to the trial of former Dinamo Zagreb director Zdravko Mamic.

It would seem that the Croatian's collection of individual awards is only likely to increase over the coming months. Ronaldo may not like it, but 2018 has been the year of Luka Modric.

Gavin Hamilton

Silvio Berlusconi

Former Milan owner back in business at Monza

Eighteen months after selling his stake in Milan, former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi and his trusted aide Adriano Galliani are set to return to Italian football, having agreed to buy a shareholding in Serie C side Monza.

"Talking together [with Berlusconi] about this and that, not long after we had sold Milan and we were missing football, we came up with the idea of buying another club," Galliani told the daily newspaper *Corriere della Sera*.

"In these last months, President Berlusconi has declined a number of potential club purchases that have been offered to him, just as I have declined a number of club appointments."

Galliani pointed out that Monza was an obvious choice as Berlusconi lives just three kilometres up the road from their Stadio Brianteo and there has always been a special link with Milan, with Monza serving as a satellite club for the Serie A team in the 1990s. Galliani, who was Monza's vice-president and sport director from 1975 to 1985, added: "I was born and grew up in Monza and I started my professional career there."

But is this a footballing move, or are there political strings attached?

Ever since formally entering politics in 1994 with a famous television address in which he spoke of taking "to the pitch" of political life, Berlusconi has interwoven the image of the successful football entrepreneur with that of the pragmatic politician who can get things done.

Still an important figure on the national scene, he may well feel that his input into Monza, a club in the heartland of the country's centre-right support, will earn credibility and votes for both his own Forza Italia party and for that of his major ally, the League, which is currently power-sharing in government with the Five Star Movement.

> "President Berlusconi has declined a number of potential club purchases that have been offered to him"
>
> **Adriano Galliani**

Notwithstanding 2013's five-year ban on him holding public office due to a tax-evasion conviction, Berlusconi has remained a key political player, even if Forza Italia saw its vote drop from a one-time high of 29.4 per cent in 2001 to 14.4 per cent in March's general election – elections in which, incidentally, Galliani was elected to a Senate seat for Forza Italia.

If Berlusconi and Galliani can work the old Milan magic and take Monza from Serie C to the top flight for the first time in their history, their success may be as beneficial for Forza Italia and League supporters as it would be for local football fans.

Interestingly, the man that Berlusconi will be buying the club from is Nicola Colombo, who is son of Felice Colombo – who was president of Milan, from 1977 to 1980, when they were relegated to Serie B over the so-called "TotoNero" betting scandal.

Paddy Agnew

Question...is buying Monza (in white) a political move?

Red Bull Salzburg

Missing out on Champions League – again

Hope...a banner at the home game against Red Star

Winners of the past five Austrian league titles and nine in total this century, Red Bull Salzburg have a constant and unremitting tendency to trip themselves up when it comes to making the Champions League group phase.

Since the soft-drink conglomerate began its association with the club in 2005, Salzburg have failed in all 11 of their attempts to qualify for the group stage, losing to teams such as Maccabi Haifa and Hapoel Tel Aviv of Israel, Luxembourg's Dudelange and Rijeka from Croatia.

This season there was a widespread belief at the Red Bull Arena that their elite-level duck was finally about to be broken. Their march to the semi-finals of last season's Europa League – during which they claimed the scalps of Borussia Dortmund and Lazio – had raised morale no end. They had also held on to impressive German coach Marco Rose and rising star midfielders Hannes Wolf and Amadou Haidara, who were both in the Salzburg side that won the UEFA Youth League in 2017.

However, that optimism was to prove misplaced as their dream was smashed to pieces in the play-off round by Red Star in a case of "Euro Groundhog Day". Seemingly home and dry after holding the Belgrade side to a goalless draw in the away leg and then going 2-0 up in the return, the Austrians inexplicably fell asleep, conceding two goals in 77 devastating seconds and eventually going out on the away-goals rule.

"It's a hammer blow and it hurts a lot," said Rose afterwards. "We really deserved to win. Even after being pegged back we still had chances to secure the victory. It's a terribly bitter evening for us."

Salzburg director of sport Christoph

> Under pressure from UEFA regarding multiple-club ownership, Red Bull now only serve as Salzburg's main sponsors, paying for around 30 per cent of their annual costs

Freund insists that another season without elite European football will not have any effect on future transfer-market activity, pointing out that the club do not budget for a place in the Champions League proper, only counting on income from the preliminary rounds and the Europa League.

But they have certainly missed out on a huge windfall. Qualification for the Champions League group stage would have brought them in excess of €20million. By way of comparison, they only made half that figure in their exceptional Europa League run last term.

Having dropped into the Europa League once again, they began this season's campaign away to fellow Red Bull outfit RB Leipzig and won 3-2 thanks to a last-minute goal from

Flying start...Red Bull Salzburg won all seven of their opening league games, including this 3-1 victory over Admira

Norwegian striker Fredrik Gulbrandsen.

In contrast to the free-spending German outfit, Salzburg have to keep a close eye on their finances. Under pressure from UEFA regarding multiple-club ownership, Red Bull stopped being Salzburg's proprietors in 2015 and now only serve as their main sponsors, paying for around 30 per cent of the annual costs. Budgetary belts have had to be tightened and they are now a selling club, having cashed in on such players as Sadio Mane and Naby Keita of late.

The good news for Salzburg is a UEFA rule change means that, from next season, the Austrian league winners will go directly into the Champions League group draw. And given the start Salzburg have made to their domestic campaign, the end of the drought could be in sight.

"The way we operate and our goals have not fundamentally altered," says Freund. "The plan is to establish ourselves in the Champions League and compete well in it. One of our cornerstones is our academy and the aim is to have a first-team which is at least three-quarters made up of youth graduates."

Nick Bidwell

Juan Carlos Osorio

Colombian takes on Paraguay challenge

Some might see it as a step down to leave Mexico in order to take charge of Paraguay, but Juan Carlos Osorio does not agree. True, he might have been waiting for a vacancy with his native Colombia, only to grow impatient at the indecision surrounding Jose Pekerman, who left the job in August. But the fact remains that the coach who engineered Germany's shock first-roung defeat at this summer's World Cup is now the man behind Paraguay's challenge to make it to Qatar.

Trading in a nation with a population in excess of 127 million for a relatively poor one with more than 120 million fewer people is a bold move – but not an incomprehensible one.

There is one obvious attraction – and it is that Paraguay is a place where Osorio could really make a difference.

Although they failed to make it to the last two World Cups, Paraguay's potential is clear. Where Mexico constantly fret over their quest for the "fifth game", Paraguay reached that landmark in 2010 when they made their debut in the World Cup quarter-finals – and probably gave Spain the toughest knockout match in any of their three consecutive tournament wins.

There is also an easily identifiable fit between Osorio's thinking and the historic identity of the Paraguayan game. As well as the legendary fighting spirit of the Paraguayans, who so often seem capable of forming teams which are greater than the sum of their parts, there is a style of play that is less dependent on traditional South American midfield elaboration, with more emphasis on hard running and aerial strength.

In his opening press conference Osorio said: "[Paraguay] have been successful with direct football, and adding a couple of things to this we could have good results. I worked at Manchester City, and getting to know English football helped me understand that direct football has a number of advantages. So I haven't come to change this."

He has also done his homework, adding: "Before accepting the proposal from the Paraguayan FA we analysed the resources, the talent available, and we saw that there is a group of players under 25 who are good in the present with the promise of getting better in the future.

"If we complete the process [and qualify for Qatar 2022] they will meet the challenge around the age of 28.

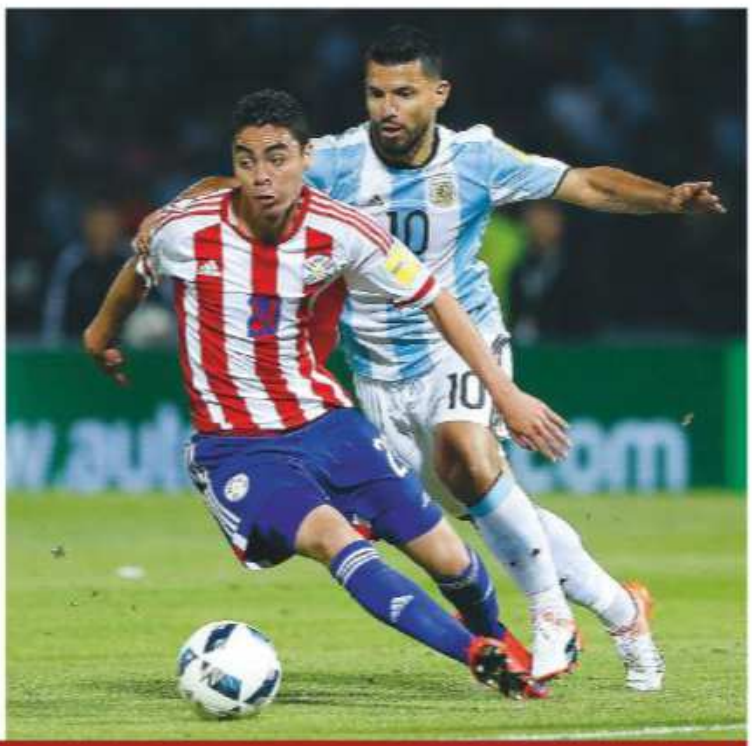
"Our analysis also concluded that there are very good players in the key positions. We have a defender with the quality of Junior Alonso, who is left-footed and can play at centre-back or full-back. We have Derlis Gonzalez and Cecilio Dominguez to play as wingers."

Rapid transitions to wide attackers are a key part of the Osorio method and were instrumental in Mexico's World Cup victory over Germany. With this in mind he said one reason why he took the job was the chance to work with attacking midfielder Miguel Almiron, who is full of pace, has a wonderful left foot and looks like being the standout name in Paraguay's future.

Paraguay have no competitive games until June's Copa America but their mix of traditional virtues with the lively mind of Juan Carlos Osorio will make them one of the South American national teams to watch when they return to action against Argentina in November.

Tim Vickery

Standout...Miguel Almiron gets away from Argentina's Sergio Aguero



> "There is a group of players under 25 who are good in the present with the promise of getting better in the future. If we complete the process [and qualify for Qatar 2022] they will meet the challenge around the age of 28"

MARTIN
8
14

Joy...Luxembourg celebrate scoring against Moldova

eye witness

Steve Menary reports

Photography: Gerry Schmit & Getty Images

LUXEMBOURG

Nations League offers new generation a Euro dream

Grand Duchy top the table with maximum points

The crowd at Stade Josy Barthel – which is named after the 1,500m Luxembourg runner who won gold at the 1952 Olympics – was bigger than would normally be expected for a game against Moldova. And it was also far more nervous than usual.

No country has competed in more qualifying campaigns for the World Cup and European Championship without ever making the finals, but with League D of the UEFA Nations League offering the winners a place at Euro 2020, the current Luxembourg side is facing a complete unknown: expectation from local fans and media.

Luc Holtz's team have been improving gradually and picked up six points in the qualifiers for this summer's World Cup, even managing an epic 0-0 draw in France. But as

Emphatic...the final score at Stade Josy Barthel

Luxembourg Football Federation (LFF) president Paul Philipp admits, defeat in his country's opening Nations League game would have made the return match and the remaining fixtures with Belarus and San Marino "very boring".

However, after a nervous start, Luxembourg went on to dominate their visitors and win 4-0 before taking a deserved lap of honour in front of the long-serving fans.

"I think this is maybe the most exciting time," says Philipp.

And things were to get even better

Determined...Dirk Carlson of Luxembourg is stopped in his tracks by Moldova's defence

Euro battle...Dudelange's Jerry Prempeh (right) and Gonzalo Higuain of Milan

Shock...David Turpel's penalty gives Dudelange victory over Legia Warsaw in Poland

three days later when a 3-0 win away to San Marino put Luxembourg top of their group, two points clear of second-place Belarus, whom they visit on October 12.

But it is not just the national side's progress and dreams of a finals debut that has got the country excited. With a new stadium under construction and a club in the group stage of the Europa League for the first time, these are heady times for football in Luxembourg.

At domestic level, investment from local tycoon Flavio Becca at F91 Dudelange has produced a seismic event in the club game.

"Our target was always Europa League qualification but this has come early," admits Dudelange board member Manou Goergen.

After an early Champions League elimination at the hands of Hungary's Vidi, Dudelange produced a series of rapidly improving performances to knockout Drita of Kosovo, Poland's Legia Warsaw and the Romanian champions CFR Cluj.

And after booking a group-stage place alongside Olympiakos, Milan and Real Betis, Becca's nouveau riche side will not only be rubbing shoulders with some European heavyweights, they have also earned themselves a huge windfall.

While defeat to Vidi in the Champions League first qualifying round earned €540,000 it is Dudelange's Europa League qualification that is the real earner, with the club guaranteed €2.92million plus additional revenue based on TV rights. A draw would be worth a further €190,000 and any win, however unlikely, would rake in €570,000. So, even if they lose all six games the club should be around €3.5m better off.

To put that in context, UEFA's latest financial benchmarking report shows the average club turnover in Luxembourg is €700,000 a year.

Clubs in Luxembourg do not have owners as they are officially amateur and Becca is not even Dudelange's president. But although his status is that of sponsor, it is the Italian-born former bricklayer, who was raised in Luxembourg, that is responsible for the club's success. Having built a property and sporting empire that also includes the Leopard Pro Cycling team and Belgium third-tier side Royal Excelsior Virton, Becca's sporting plans often involve heavy outlay and little income. The cycling team reportedly costs around €15m, while Dudelange's budget is officially €2.5m a year but is widely believed to be higher.

Tycoon...Flavio Becca

This season Dudelange signed former Germany under-21 midfielder Marc-Andre Kruska – who played more than 250 Bundesliga games for Borussia Dortmund and Energie Cottbus – and Serbian international defender Milan Bisevac from Metz.

With their domestic rivals paying €1,500 a month, Dudelange's full-time players can earn €10,000 a month – which means the club hoovers up players at an alarming rate, with between 40 and 50 players under contract and swathes farmed out to rival clubs.

Former domestic powerhouse Jeunesse Esch – who have 28 national ➤

> "This is a golden time, but maybe it has come too early. I think in five or six years we can be even better"
> **National under-21 coach Manuel Cardoni**

Derby... Jeunesse Esch (in black) and Fola Esch

Movers & Shakers

LUC HOLTZ
Stepped up to lead the national team in 2010 after two years as under-21 coach, having made 55 appearances for Luxembourg between 1991 and 2002. He played all his club football in the Grand Duchy.

PAUL PHILIPP
Played professionally in Belgium in the 1970s and early 1980s and won 54 caps for Luxembourg. Was in charge of the national team from 1985 until 2001 before taking over as president of the Luxembourg Football Federation in 2004.

MARIO MUTSCH
Played professionally for a decade in Germany, Switzerland and France before joining Progres Niederkorn in 2017. National captain and record appearance holder, he won his 100th cap against San Marino in September.

LEANDRO BARREIRO
Tipped as a future star, he has both the ability and the mentality to succeed. Only 18 but a regular in the national under-21 side, he has been on the bench in the Bundesliga with Mainz this season.

MIRALEM PJANIC
Arrived in the Duchy as a one-year-old refugee from the Balkan conflict and played for Luxembourg at under-17s and under-19s before switching to his father's country, Bosnia. The Juventus midfielder is still well liked in Luxembourg, where he returns regularly to see his family.

titles compared to Dudelange's 14 – have half a dozen players on loan from the current champions, but they have not won the league since 2010.

The main threat to Dudelange's recent dominance has come from Fola Esch, whose president Gerard Lopez was also chairman of Formula 1 team Lotus from 2009 to 2015 and briefly played for the club. In 2010 he brought in Jeff Strasser as coach. One of the few Luxembourgers to make a career in a major European league, ex-Borussia Monchengladbach and Kaiserslautern centre-back Strasser led Fola to league success in 2013 and 2015. However, when he left to take charge of Kaiserslautern last year, Lopez also stood down, although Strasser returned in August.

Fola finished third last season behind Progres Niederkorn, who are benefitting from investment from a consortium led by local businessman Fabio Marochi.

Yet even with increased competition for Dudelange, the crowds at domestic games remain poor.

Every week, hundreds of fans turn their backs on the local game and board coaches bound for Bundesliga matches. As a result, Jeunesse Esch attract attendances of around 1,200 while Differdange 03 and Progres average between 800 and 900 fans. Dudelange only get 700 at their Stade Jos Nosbaum.

However, formed from a merger of Alliance, Stade and US in 1991, Dudelange's Europa League campaign has briefly reversed that trend.

They moved their home games to Stade Josy Barthel in Luxembourg City and instantly sold out, in part because a ticket for all three games cost only €125.

This was a smart PR move by Dudelange's outspoken president Romain Schumacher and the oft-derided Becca, who employs Luxembourgers at both Leopard and Dudelange. In the crucial 5-2 aggregate win over Cluj that clinched Europa League qualification, the goals came from two young Luxembourgers in David Turpel and Daniel Sinani.

Defending his own club's domination, Goergen argues that "there's been investment at Fola and Progress" and believes "Luxembourg football is now developing at the same rate as the national team".

This season three Luxembourg representatives won through at least one round in Europe, with Fola beating Prishtina of Kosovo and Progres getting past Azeri side Gabala and Hungary's Honved before being narrowly edged 4-3 on aggregate by Russian side Ufa.

Olivier Thill of Progres obviously impressed Ufa as he was swiftly snapped up by the Russian club for €200,000, which is a record fee for a player in the National Division. He is one of a number of young players to emerge from an academy set up by the LFF in Mondercange in 2000. Olivier scored in the Nations League against Moldova and his younger brothers Sebastien and Vincent are also both senior internationals despite only being teenagers. There are particularly high hopes for Vincent, with the 17-year-old midfielder joining Bayern Munich on a tour to the US before turning the Germans down and joining Metz.

Of the squad that faced Moldova, eight players still eligible for the under-21 side, which is run by Manuel Cardoni who was briefly at Bayer Leverkusen.

"This is a golden time, but maybe it has come too early," says Cardoni. "I think in five or six years we can be even better."

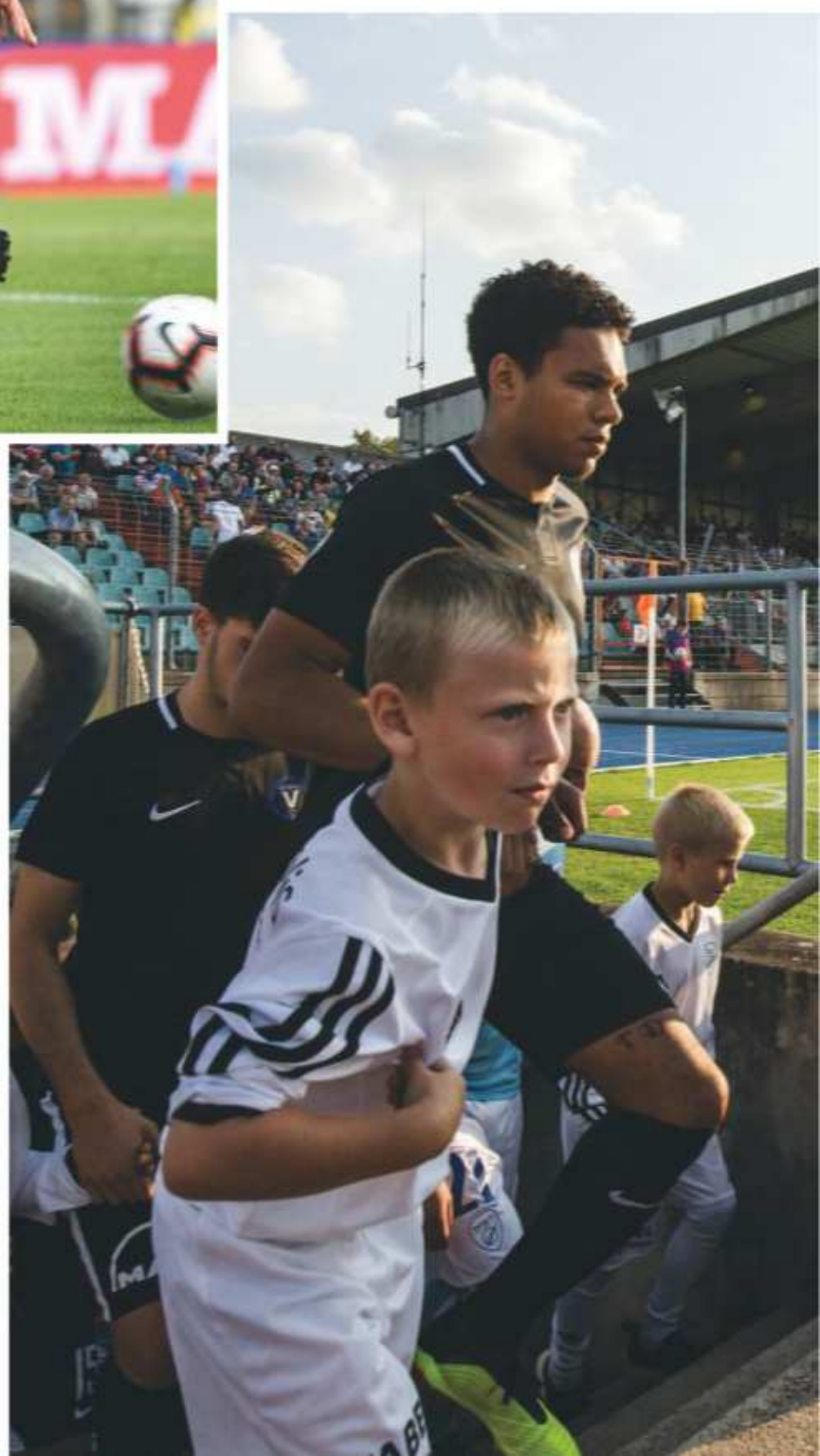
In the past, talented young Luxembourg players have often settled for the easy life of working in one of Europe's most prosperous countries and supplementing their wages with money from semi-professional football.

In a bid to change that, the LFF are trying to press promising youngsters into leaving for professional clubs elsewhere as soon as the chance arises.

Christopher Martins, who is now 21, joined Lyon's academy in 2013, and is

Europe adventure... Samir Hadji of Fola Esch (in white)

> "Luxembourg football is now developing at the same rate as the national team"
>
> **Dudelange board member Manou Goergen**



Eyes on the Euros... Luxembourg's Laurent Jans

one of a host of academy graduates that now play abroad, including Maxime Chanot at New York City in MLS, Chris Philipps, who was snapped up by Legia Warsaw after the Polish side's Europa League defeat, and Enes Mahmutovic, who joined Middlesbrough then went on loan to Yeovil.

With a potential golden generation emerging, the focus is now firmly on the Nations League.

If Luxembourg finish top of their group they will go through to the semi-finals, which will be played in March 2020 at a venue that has yet to be decided. And with the Josy Barthel due for demolition and a new €60m, 9,385-seat stadium ready for next year the Grand Duchy could offer to stage the games.

Hosting matches involving the smaller European sides in a neutral venue would make little sense – and home advantage could prove vital for one of Europe's most rapidly improving smaller countries. WS

Out...Racing (in sky blue) lost to Romania's Viitorul Constanta in the Europa League

NATIONAL DIVISION: 2018-19

DIFFERDANGE 03
Formed from a merger of Red Boys and AS in 2003 and regular competitors in Europe. Signed ex-France winger Florent Malouda in January before the 38-year-old retired this summer.

ETZELLA ETTELBRUCK
Won the second-tier Division of Honneur last season to return to the top flight, where they were runners-up in 2007.

F91 DUDELANGE
Reigning champions and the Duchy's richest club, they have won 11 league titles in the last 14 seasons.

FOLA ESCH
Won their first title for 83 years in 2013 and repeated the feat in 2015. Mauro Mariani replaced Gerard Lopez as president last year after the latter bought French side Lille, and Jeff Strasser returned as coach this August.

HOSTERT
Promoted to the National Division in 2011 and known as "the team from the forest". The club has a strong youth set-up.

JEUNESSE ESCH
The country's best supported side and winner of a record 28 titles.

MONDORF-LES-BAINS
South-eastern club run by the father and brother of Jeff Strasser.

PROGRES NIEDERKORN
Runners-up last season, they knocked Scottish side Rangers out of last term's Europa League qualifiers.

RACING
Luxembourg City's main club were formed in 2005 from a merger of Spora, Union and CS Alliance. The club has a big youth academy but few fans.

RM HAMM BENFICA
Formed in 2004, when FC Hamm 37 and RM 86 Luxembourg merged then amalgamated with Luxembourg Benfica.

RUMELANGE
Twice domestic cup winners, they returned to the top flight this season as second division runners-up.

UNA STRASSEN
Based in central Luxembourg and date back to 1922 but have had little success.

UNION TITUS PETANGE
Formed from a merger in 2015 between CS and Titus Lamaldelaine. Their coach is former Jose Mourinho assistant, Baltemar Brito.

VICTORIA ROSPORT
Founded in 1928, they are based in a small village and rely heavily on players from neighbouring Germany.

ДОБРО
ДОШЛИ У ГРАД ЕВРОПСКОГ ПРВАКА!

eyewitness

James Montague reports

SERBIA

Back from the brink

Red Star return to the Champions League

At 83 years of age, Vladimir Popovic can't get up and down the stairs of his Belgrade apartment like he used to, but his memory of the time he met Chairman Mao is as clear as glass.

"There, behind him," he says scanning a black-and-white photo hanging on the wall of his hallway. It is of the Yugoslav national team standing in front of a huge Chinese flag. He points to a young man, just a few inches behind Mao, over his left shoulder. "I remember, they gave us all jackets to wear just like his!"

The walls of Popovic's home tell a story of an incredible life but also of an era, and a country, that no longer exists.

There's the pictures of Popovic lining up with his team-mates for Red Star in

Expectant...the Rajko Mitic Stadium before Red Star's opening Champions League game against Napoli

a European Cup quarter-final against Manchester United in 1958. The game ended 3-3. Five of the men he played against would be killed the next day in the Munich air disaster.

There are pictures of Popovic being carried out of Bogata airport by Santa Fe fans after winning the Colombian championship in 1971. "People were carrying me through the streets!" he says. Popovic would spend nine years, on and off, in the early 1970s and late 1990s coaching at Santa Fe, Atletico Nacional and Deportivo Cali.

There's a picture of a Yugoslav general in full military regalia, on the pitch at the JNA Stadium in Belgrade, handing Popovic the Marshal Tito Cup after Red Star had beaten Dinamo Zagreb in the 1964 Final. There are pictures and cuttings of the Yugoslav national team with whom he won a silver medal at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne and also represented at the 1962 World Cup in Chile, where they finished fourth. And, of course, the picture with Mao, when the Yugoslav national team visited China.

But a picture hanging on the opposite wall is Popovic's crowning glory.

The picture was taken in 1991. The entire Red Star team is lined up on the pitch of what is now the Rajko Mitic Stadium – named after Popovic's midfield partner who died in 2007 – but still known by everyone as the Marakana. In front is the Intercontinental Cup, now known as the Club World Cup, won in Tokyo after beating Chile's Colo-Colo 3-0.

Red Star...Popovic (back row, far left) and the team that played Manchester United in 1958

Red Star qualified after winning the 1991 European Cup Final against Marseille on penalties. But the coach who masterminded that victory, Ljupko Petrovic, had left the club and Popovic was given the unenviable task of defending the title.

"At that time when I took the club it was a great honour for me, but at the same time a big obligation," recalls

> "At that time when I took the club it was a great honour for me, but at the same time a big obligation"
>
> **Vladimir Popovic**

Popovic. "But I wanted this very much." He'd kept the team together but it had been tough. Players in the Yugoslav First League were prevented from moving abroad until they were 28 but the world's biggest club's had come knocking after the 1991 European Cup Final. "They were very talented players but the situation wasn't easy," he adds. "We managed to keep the best known players although a certain number wanted to leave."

And there they all were, on Popovic's wall, after they officially became world club champions: Dejan Savicevic, Miodrag Belodedici, Sinisa Mihajlovic and Darko Panchev, to name but a few.

The picture of the Intercontinental Cup didn't just capture one of the finest European teams ever assembled; it also captures the final few moments of Red Star as a feared European super power and, perhaps, the moment that football changed forever.

Memories... Vladimir Popovic

Support...Red Star fans celebrate in Salzburg

In August this year, Red Star were losing 2-0 to Red Bull Salzburg in the second leg of a Champions League play-off. Not since 1991 had Red Star reached the group stage of European football's premier competition. In fact, they started this year's tournament in the first qualifying round and their first match was in July on the day England lost to Croatia in the World Cup semi-finals.

At one point, in 2014, UEFA banned Red Star from playing in the Champions League over unpaid debts and Financial Fairplay violations.

But, in Austria, in front of a home crowd that had been invaded by up to 15,000 Serbs, Red Star staged an improbable comeback, thanks largely to their recently signed Australian international defender Milos Degenek, who was born in Yugoslavia but had been made a refugee twice before settling in Australia. He made and scored a goal and, within a few minutes, Red Star were suddenly going through to the group stage on away goals.

Much has changed since Red Star were last in Europe's elite. In many ways, that 1991-92 campaign, and Popovic's single season in charge of the club, was a pivotal moment in European football.

It was the last-ever European Cup; the following season it would be replaced by the Champions League which would march on to become a financial behemoth. It was the first season English teams were allowed back into European competition following the Heysel disaster, paving the way for English clubs to be reintroduced to European football and set them on a path to the Premier League and everything that followed.

It was also the end of a time when the champions of far away places had a fair chance of winning the title, before money became the only arbiter of success.

More destructive, however, was the onset of the Yugoslav War, and Red Star had to play all their home games abroad, in Hungary and Bulgaria.

"That period was very hard for us," says Popovic. "It would have been better to play in front of 80,000 of our people in our atmosphere."

Still, they very nearly made it to the Final. They took an early lead in their penultimate group game against Sampdoria, in Sofia, and with a victory

Champions...the team that won the European Cup in 1991, beating Marseille on penalties in the Final

they were virtually guaranteed a spot in the Final. But they ended up losing 3-1 and their title defence was over.

"We had Savicevic, Najdoski, Jugovic, Belodedici. We certainly did feel like we could do it," continues Popovic. "But the situation was hard to play abroad. But we were 20 minutes away. Those factors influenced it. If we could have played at home we'd have done it."

The years of isolation were ruinous for Yugoslav football. Croatian and Slovenian teams had already left the Yugoslav First League after declaring independence, and the Bosnian War meant that all but one team from Bosnia dropped out by the start of 1992.

International sanctions meant that Yugoslavia were banned from the 1992 European Championships, replaced by eventual winners Denmark.

By the time the conflicts finally ended, in 2001, Red Star emerged into a very different world.

A hero of that recent night in Austria, Degenek is still a stranger in the city he once lived in. The Australia international is sitting on the steps of the Church of Saint Sava in Belgrade, a city where he was once, as a child, a refugee.

"I'm back to where life took its turns. I'm home, but it's away from home," he says. "Even now, everything is still quite new to me."

Degenek was born in what is today Croatia. In 1995, when he was 18 months old, his family fled his home city of Knin due to Operation Storm, the final battle of Croatia's war of independence.

Operation Storm is still hugely controversial. In Croatia it is celebrated as a national holiday for ending their war. But for Serbs it is seen as a largely unpunished war crime and proof of the asymmetrical justice that has followed. Hundreds of civilians were killed and the operation produced 200,000 civilian refugees, including the Degenek family who ended up outside Belgrade. When NATO bombers arrived in the skies again

Home...Milos Degenek (right)

Group game...Red Star's El Fardou Ben Nabouhane (centre) battles with Lorenzo Insigne of Napoli

Former glories...Sinisa Mihajlovic (left) and Dejan Savicevic and their team-mates from the 1991 Red Star side parade in front of supporters before the Champions League game against Napoli

in 1999, in order to end Slobodan Milosovic's bloody campaign against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, the Degenek family was on the move once more. This time they settled in Australia.

"That was a turning point in our lives," says Degenek. "We were in camps somewhere. None of us spoke English. The first three or four weeks I cried every night. It was really difficult.

"I'm grateful to Australia for allowing us to start our life again and for giving us a chance to move on peacefully."

Although it was tough, Degenek took Red Star, his childhood club, with him and visited the club's website every day to watch training videos and glean any information he could about the club. That, and SBS' Serie A show every Sunday, was his window on the outside world. "There's always one club that you'll love and support," he says. "You can play for another club and you can like them and be part of them. But there's only one club that you can truly love and support – which is the club you grow up with. Everyone has that. Even Lionel Messi."

After going to the World Cup in Russia with Australia, Degenek signed for Red Star in the summer. Like most footballers who were once refugees he had a choice to make: represent the country of his roots or the country that had given him and his family shelter.

It was an easy choice to make he says, explaining: "I'm from here, but technically I'm not from here either. I'm from Croatia. I'm from Yugoslavia, and that doesn't exist anymore. I spent most of my life in Australia. Australia gave my parents, my brother and me most of all what we have. That's why I'm proud to say I am Australian and play for Australia."

Still, signing for Red Star was a homecoming of sorts and Degenek's heroics against Salzburg have made him an instant hero. "All we needed was 77 seconds and I guess Salzburg will have to wait another year!" he beams. "I'll never forget. The club will never forget. It will forever be remembered. After the game, the scenes! It was ballistic."

Twenty six years after Red Star began their defence of the European Cup with Popovic in charge, the club were back in the European elite, in a group with Liverpool, Paris Saint-Germain and Napoli.

They began the group phase against Napoli in the Marakana, which was full an hour before kickoff, with 55,000 fans making a ferocious noise.

The Italian side, under Carlo Ancelotti, looked dangerous in spells but Degenek excelled at centre-back, while keeper Milan Borjan was man of the match after making a string of stunning saves. Like Degenek, Borjan is another Knin refugee who made his way back to Belgrade, this time from Canada.

Unfortunately, Popovic wasn't at the stadium to watch Red Star's European return as his legs can give him trouble if he sits for too long in one place – a result, he says, of a botched operation from his playing days. But he watched it at home on TV and says: "Nobody will forget that period but we want to achieve that again and have the team like we had in 1991, even though we know that is very difficult.

"Now we can achieve the results the supporters expect. It is possible."

The law of financial returns in football should mean it's impossible – Red Star won't get out of their group, won't make the knockout stage and won't emulate that great generation from 1991 and 1992. But a goalless draw with Napoli showed that heart and an impeccably organised defence can still go a long way.

"I've represented my country and I've played in the Champions League," said Degenek afterwards. "I'll tell my children, and my children's children. I'll keep bragging about that until I die.

"It'll keep me happy for ever." WS

> "There's always one club that you'll love and support. You can play for another club and you can like them and be part of them, but there's only one club that you can truly love and support – which is the club you grow up with"
>
> **Milos Degenek**

From shy kid to Anfield hero

WORDS: Nick Bidwell

Having arrived in Europe as a timid teenager, the Brazilian is now the focal point of Liverpool's world-class attacking trident

Scouting for overseas talent is no job for the naive. Just ask Hoffenheim, who had an eye-opening experience in 2010 when running the rule over 18-year-old Roberto Firmino, who at the time was a midfielder with second division Brazilian side Figueirense.

"We'd got hold of a video of Firmino from an agent and it left us puzzled," reveals the club's former director of sport, Ernst Tanner. "In it, Firmino appeared to have a shot like an absolute rocket. But we knew he didn't hit a ball like that in reality.

"The video had been speeded up. Every bit of play was that little bit quicker."

Whether cutting-room shenanigans or just technological incompetence, the German club was not going to be put off the scent and they set about watching him in the flesh over a sustained period of time. Convinced he was made of the right stuff, they finally signed him for a cut-price €5million in December 2010.

Plenty of water has passed under the bridge since then, with the Brazilian meeting every career examination with flying colours and developing, at the age of 26, into one of the world's best all-round forwards.

"The boy was just a really good player,"

Timeline

OCT 24, 2009

Makes his debut as a half-time sub for Figueirense in a 2-1 home loss to Ponte Preta in the Brazilian second tier.

MAY 8, 2010

Scores his first goal as Figueirense win 1-0 away to Sao Caetano.

JAN 1, 2011

Officially joins Hoffenheim, agreeing a contract with the German club until June 2015.

FEB 26, 2011

Makes his Bundesliga debut as a 75th-minute substitute in a 2-1 loss at home to Mainz.

recalls Tanner. "What impressed me the most was his attitude.

"His coaches in Brazil did a tremendous job of preparing him. They used to criticise him a lot, but he never took it the wrong way. He'd come back for more. He wouldn't be deterred.

"In training sessions [with Figueirense] he worked like a man possessed. He was irresistible. He had a real never-say-die attitude. That was awesome."

A great deal of fake-news folklore has grown up around how he came to the attention of Hoffenheim. Some claim club officials first noticed him on the *Football Manager* video game, while others say coach Ralf Rangnick spotted him on YouTube.

But while renowned talent-spotter Rangnick would certainly have checked him out on YouTube and was extremely keen to bring the youngster to Europe, he did not personally kick-start the headhunting process. The man who effectively planted the seed in the Hoffenheim consciousness was player agent Roger Wittmann.

His company Rogon enjoyed a close working relationship with the German club and had already supplied them with Brazilian midfielders Carlos Eduardo, Luiz Gustavo and Maicosuel, striker Wellington and centre-back Fabricio. With his extensive network of contacts in Brazil, Wittmann very much had his finger on the footballing pulse there. So as soon as Firmino began to make a name for himself – with a key role in Figueirense's promotion to the top flight in 2010 – he was on the phone to Dietmar Hopp, who is the German club's financial backer.

But it wasn't a smooth ride all the way for the youngster on arriving in Germany. Homesickness was a malaise he could not shake and he couldn't master the language, usually having to communicate through a translator. And he was even dropped from the first-team squad for a spell when guilty of turning up late for training. But determined not to quit, he knuckled down and integrated.

Hoffenheim proved to be the perfect point of entry into the European game for Firmino. He never had to worry about first-team rotation – if he was fit, he played – and he could learn his trade in a good quality Bundesliga side, where he was used mainly in an advanced midfield role but also clocked up time as a winger, second striker and leader of the line.

Impressed... Ernst Tanner

But after four-and-a-half seasons at the Rhein-Neckar-Arena, both player and club knew it was time for Firmino to move on from Hoffenheim.

As the club's director of football Alexander Rosen explained: "Because of his quality and spectacular development in the past couple of years, we were no longer in a position to hold onto him.

"It was always clear that at some point he was going to become too big for us. His departure for Liverpool left us with one eye laughing and the other shedding a tear."

Hoffenheim did not merely provide Firmino with a platform for fame and fortune; they also schooled him to be the sort of player that Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp loves.

Under Hoffenheim coaches Rangnick and Markus Gisdol, the Brazilian was an integral part of a Klopp-like machine: with attackers as the first wave of the high press, split-second transitions and turbo-charged attacking forays.

So it's easy to see why Klopp says of the Brazilian: "He is world class pretty much every day."

Much to the fore as Liverpool finished as Champions League runners-up last season, Firmino is arguably the key player in their attack. While Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane are the fleet-footed flank arrows, he is the one who lights the fuse, creating all sorts of havoc with his

> "The boy was just a really good player. What impressed me the most was his attitude"
> **Ernst Tanner, Hoffenheim's former director of sport**

APR 16, 2011
Gets his first goal for Hoffenheim as they beat Eintracht Frankfurt 1-0.

MAR 27, 2014
Signs a three-year contract extension with Hoffenheim.

NOV 12, 2014
Makes his Brazil debut in a 4–0 win over Turkey, coming off the bench for the last 17 minutes.

NOV 18, 2014
Gets his first international goal as Brazil win 2-1 against Austria in Vienna.

JUN 23, 2015
Agrees to joins Liverpool, with the deal being finalised on July 4.

AUG 9, 2015
Makes his Premier League debut in a 1-0 win at Stoke City.

Runner-up...after losing the Champions League Final in May

clever runs off the ball, awareness around the box, creativity and hunger to win the ball back.

Brendan Rodgers, who was Klopp's predecessor at Anfield, wasted Firmino on the wing in his early days, expecting him to do too much tracking back and keeping him away from goal. But Klopp plays to the Brazilian's strength: his sharpness of mind. "He thinks so quickly that he seems to have faster nerve impulses than anyone else," former Hoffenheim boss Gisdol once declared.

Versatile...he played in several different roles at Hoffenheim

Born and brought up in Maceio, the capital of the north-eastern Brazilian state of Alagoas, Roberto Firmino Barbosa de Oliveira grew up in the Trapiche quarter of town, where life was hard for father Jose Roberto, mother Mariana and younger sister Roberta Marcella. With his dad making a meagre living selling water and soft drinks, there was barely enough money for food so the adolescent Roberto had to do his bit, selling coconuts on a local beach.

One of his teachers at junior school, Adriana Leite, remembers a conversation she had with the then 10-year-old. "One day he told me that the power had been cut off in his house," she told Brazilian daily *O Globo*. "I asked him about the things in the refrigerator.

"He replied that apart from water, there was nothing in there. I've never forgotten this episode. It had a great impact on me. When I see pictures of him now, I have trouble associating them with the slim boy I used to know in my classroom."

Obsessed with the game from the earliest of ages, he joined local amateur side Independente and got his first big break at 14 when taken on board by regional powerhouse CRB (Clube de Regatas Brasil) after a successful trial.

"From the first moment I set eyes on him, I could see the potential he had," CRB youth-team coach Guilherme told *O Globo*. "I straight away sent someone to get his paperwork in order.

"As a player for our junior teams he used to wear the defensive midfield number five shirt. He was a very humble kid. A good lad.

"Sometimes he didn't have enough money to get to training and we'd help him out. I also recall him often arriving at the ground on the back of his father's bike. He's come a long way since then."

During his three seasons with CRB, where he often lined up alongside future Real Sociedad and Brazil striker Willian Jose, he was befriended by the club dentist, Martellus Portella, who was to become his advisor and agent.

"The first time I saw him play for the CRB youth team I immediately realised what a talented boy he was," Portella said to the Sao Paulo newspaper *O Estado*. "He had phenomenal intelligence, he dribbled well and had great vision.

"The thing was, no one seemed to pay too much attention to him. When I made the prediction that he would one day play for Brazil, I was told I was crazy. The others were the crazy ones."

In normal circumstances Firmino would have turned pro at CRB, who were in the Brazilian second division. However, a gaping hole in the club's finances saw Firmino and Portella looking elsewhere.

It was Atletico Mineiro midfielder Bilu, who was also a native of Maceio, who came to the rescue, arranging for the 17-year-old to try out with three-time South American champions Sao Paulo.

When that came to nothing, Bilu's next call was to Figueirense in the southern state of Santa Catarina. "In his first training session with us, he scored two great overhead-kick goals in the opening 30 minutes," recalls under-17 coach Hemerson Maria. "It was so impressive. We'd planned to give him an extensive workout but that was all the time we needed to realise what a good player the kid was. Bad luck for Sao Paulo."

Figueirense switched him to an attacking midfield role, and Maria says: "He didn't have a high level of education but had remarkable game intelligence.

"He was the complete player. A good decision-maker, technical, and performing with a lot of personality. He was a special one and I had no hesitation in making him my number 10. He was very driven too. In his first season here, he didn't once go back to his home town. He said he didn't want to go back until he'd made it in life. Once he'd become a professional and started to earn a larger salary he'd go back to Maceio for national holidays."

Character-wise, the teenage Firmino was the classic Jekyll-and-Hyde type. Assertive and confident on the field of play, he was introverted off it. Maria has a particularly relevant tale to tell when he says: "Since I had a lot of new youngsters in my team, I used to get some of the

World class...with Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp

NOV 21, 2015
Scores his first goal for Liverpool, in a 4-1 victory away at Manchester City.

FEB 28, 2016
Substituted with 10 minutes of normal time remaining as Liverpool lose to Man City in the League Cup Final.

MAY 18, 2016
On the losing side in the Europa League Final as Sevilla beat Liverpool 3-1.

NOV 6, 2016
His goal in a 6-1 win against Watford sees Liverpool top the Premier League for the first time under Jurgen Klopp.

AUG 23, 2017
On target against former club Hoffenheim as Liverpool qualify for the Champions League group stage.

names of the boys mixed up. For the first couple of weeks of us working together I called him Alberto and he didn't correct me. Finally, one of the fitness coaches, informed me that his name was Roberto.

"To get to the bottom of it, I called out 'Alberto, come here' and he came running up to me. I asked him his name and he told me Roberto. A really nice lad but so shy."

It was in 2009 that it all started to come together for Firmino as he excelled for Figueirense's under-20s, starred in the Copa Sao Paulo junior tournament and made his first-team debut. The following year he made a major contribution to the club's second division runners-up spot, which booked their ticket back to the top flight.

Danger...taking on Switzerland at this summer's World Cup

> "He was only 17 and seemed a little lost in a different country...given what he's achieved since, it has to go down as an error on our part"
>
> **Jean-Philippe Durand on Marseille's decision not to make an offer**

Voted the championship's Revelation of the Year, he had truly arrived. He was primed and ready for that transatlantic crossing to Hoffenheim.

These days Firmino's mile-high status as one of the main men in the English top flight and Champions League must feel like a dagger between the shoulder blades for insiders at Marseille.

Tempted by excellent scouting reports and a rock-bottom price tag of just €1m, OM had not one but two failed attempts at landing the teenage Firmino.

An initial attempt to take him to the south of France for a trial ended in farce and dismay when immigration officers at Madrid airport deemed his documentation inadequate. They cancelled his ticket for a connecting flight to Marseille and deported him.

The second time Marseille at least managed to monitor him on Provencal turf, before eventually concluding that he was a little too timid for their liking.

"We had him training with our reserves for a month and all the coaches who looked at him thought he had potential," former OM personnel chief Jean-Philippe Durand told a Canal Plus talk show earlier this year. "He even took part in some shooting drills with the pro squad and was impressive. However, he was only 17 and seemed a little lost in a different country. At the time, he didn't quite fit our recruitment strategy.

"Given what he's achieved since, it has to go down as an error on our part."

A member of Brazil's side at this summer's World Cup in Russia, Firmino first broke into the *Selecao* ranks in the autumn of 2014, making his debut as a substitute in a 4-0 friendly win over Turkey in November. Six days later, he scored a late long-range winner against Austria in Vienna.

By no means a fan favourite during his two stints in charge of the *Selecao* and frequently derided for his uninspiring utilitarian brand of football, 1994 World Cup-winning skipper Dunga did recognise a class act when he saw it and he was particularly fond of Firmino.

Dunga had liked the cut of the youngster's jib during his days at Figueirense and even tried to sign him when in charge of Internacional in 2013. But that was wishful thinking on Dunga's part as Hoffenheim were determined to hold onto their star at the time.

"Firmino is an outstanding attacking-third player," explained Dunga on picking him for the first time.

"I've been following him for a long time now. He's technically very comfortable, quick, has good instincts, finishes well and always looks to make tracks for the opposition goal.

"I think he could play for any big European club."

Never was a truer word spoken. WS

Winner...Liverpool's third goal in their 3-2 victory over Paris Saint-Germain

OCT 17, 2017
Scores twice as Liverpool equal the biggest Champions League away win, beating Maribor 7–0 in Slovenia.

APR 24, 2018
Scores twice in Liverpool's 5-2 victory over Roma in the first leg of their Champions League semi-final.

MAY 26, 2018
Is a Champions League runner-up as Liverpool lose 3-1 to Real Madrid in the Final.

JUL 2, 2018
Gets Brazil's second goal in a 2-0 win against Mexico at the World Cup.

SEP 18, 2018
Marks his 150th game for Liverpool with an injury-time winner against Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League.

Roberto Firmino

the numbers game

TRANSFER FEES

FIGUEIRENSE to **HOFFENHEIM** *(Jan 2011)*

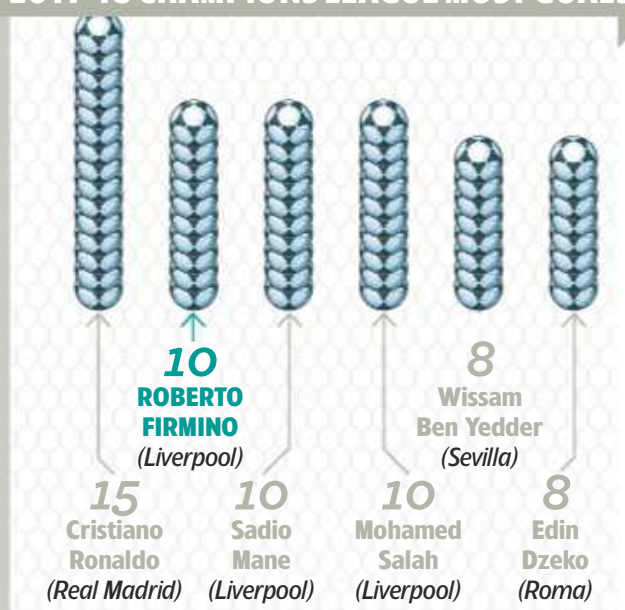
HOFFENHEIM to **LIVERPOOL** *(Jul 2015)*

BRAZIL

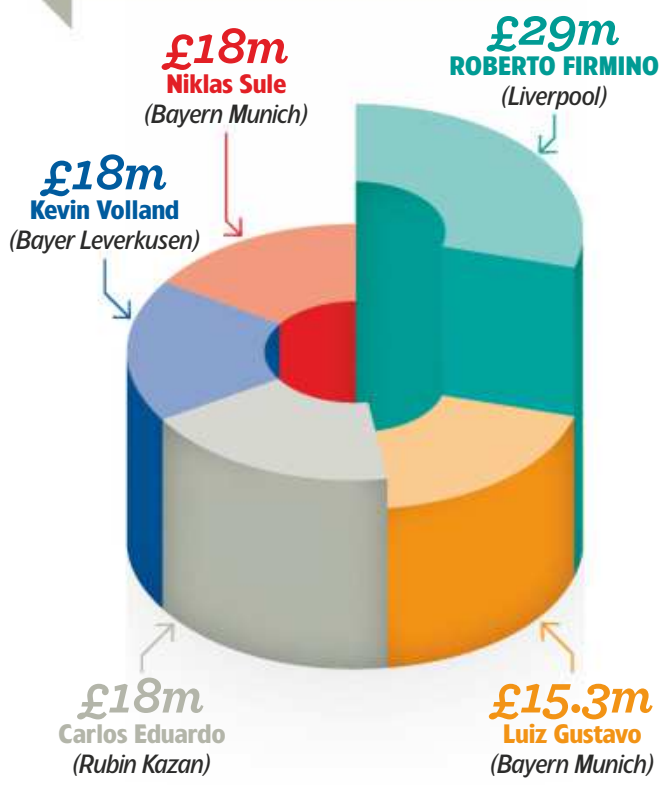
26 CAPS

8 GOALS

2017-18 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE MOST GOALS

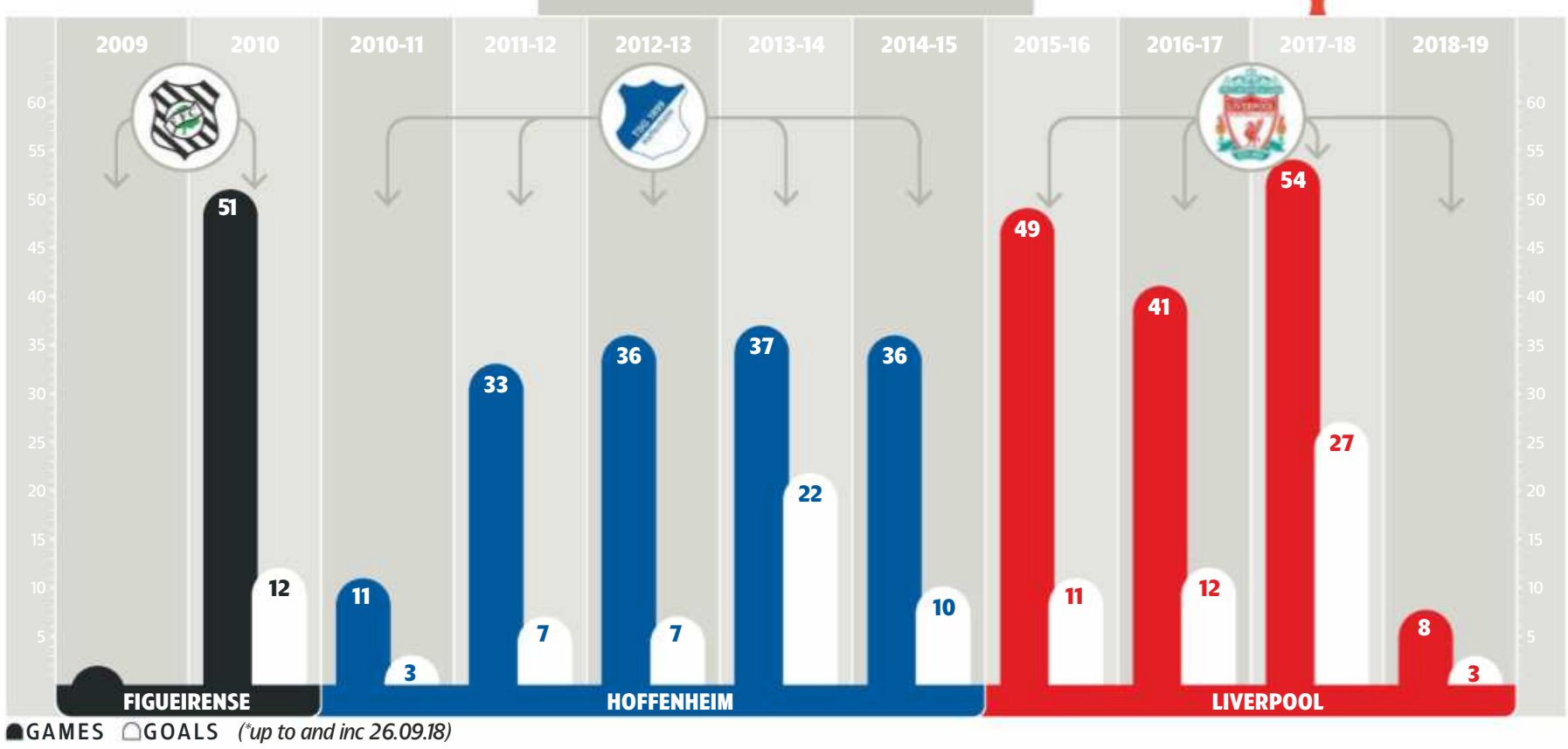


HOFFENHEIM'S BIGGEST SALES



2017-18 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE MOST ASSISTS

HONOURS



GAMES GOALS *(*up to and inc 26.09.18)*

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Talentscout

UP-AND-COMING FORWARDS

WORDS: Nick Bidwell

Jovane CABRAL

Age 20 (14.06.98), Sporting & Portugal

In a sentence
The latest in a long line of classy wingers to emerge from the youth system at Sporting, he is the heir apparent to such stars as Luis Figo, Cristiano Ronaldo, Ricardo Quaresma and Nani.

What they say
Sporting coach Jose Peseiro: "Here's a youngster with the sort of character we want. Whether he's used for 10 or 20 minutes as a substitute or is not called upon at all, he's happy to be one of us. He doesn't run away if he doesn't start. He waits for his chance and when he comes on, he gives everything."

Former Sporting B coach Joao De Deus: "He has tremendous potential. He's so well developed physically. You could say he's a bodybuilder who plays football."

Manu Lomba, his coach at Gremio Nhagar: "Even as a child of nine or 10, he had an extraordinary capability as a footballer and incredible desire."

3 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT CABRAL

- He had an unsuccessful trial with Sporting's Lisbon rivals Benfica and also went to Porto, who were keen to offer him a deal, but SCP were the most persistent.
- He was a member of the Sporting side that won the Portuguese junior title in 2017.
- A fanatical worker in the gym, no other Sporting academy pupil has managed higher marks than him in strength and speed tests.

Story so far
The ultimate impact sub for Sporting this season, he earned a penalty on his league debut against Moreirense, provided an assist versus Setubal, popped up with the only goal of the game against Feirense and was on target in a Europa League victory over Qarabag of Azerbaijan.

A native of the Cape Verde cluster of islands, he was born and raised on Santiago, the largest island of the archipelago. He began playing football at the age of nine with Gremio Nhagar, and on turning 16 he travelled to Portugal for a series of trials and was taken on by Sporting. After shining for the under-17s, under-19s and B sides, he made his senior debut in 2017, coming on as a substitute in a Portuguese Cup tie against Oleiros. He made a five-minute cameo as a sub for Cape Verde in a friendly with Luxembourg in March 2017, but has refused further call-ups and is taking up Portuguese citizenship.

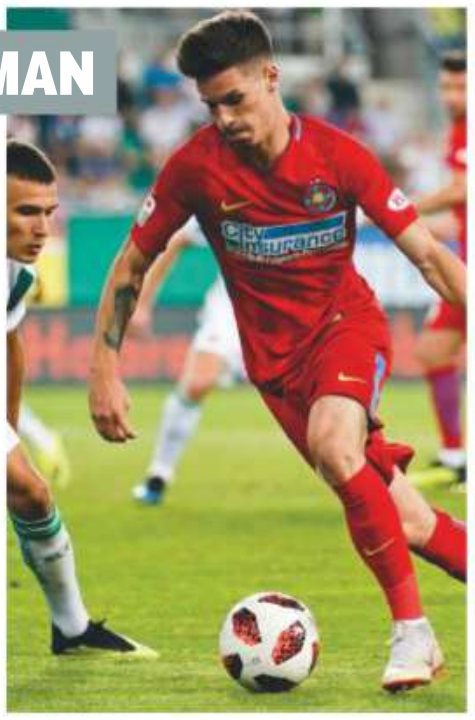
The next step
Said to be on the radar of Barcelona and Real Madrid, Sporting have extended his current contract until 2023 and increased his release clause to €60m.

Strengths
With his pace, technical dexterity and uncommon powers of improvisation he is difficult to knock off the ball. Can operate on either flank and packs a fizzing shot from distance.

Weaknesses
His decision-making leaves a little to be desired. Still raw, he can overdo the trickery and wander into dead ends.

> "He has tremendous potential. He's so well developed physically. You could say he's a bodybuilder who plays football"
> **Ex-Sporting B boss Joao De Deus**

Dennis MAN



Age 20 (26.08.98), FCSB & Romania
A left-footed winger who does his business on the right flank, he is quick, elusive and knows where the goal is. Lots of rumours are flying around of Italian interest in him, with Roma talent-spotter supreme Monchi thought to be leading the charge. Made his first full appearance for Romania in March.

Bozhidar KRAEV

Age 21 (23.06.97), Midtjylland (Den) & Bulgaria
An excellent dribbler and very creative, he can find the net too, recently scoring a brace for Bulgaria in a Nations League victory over Slovenia. A Danish champion with Midtjylland last term, he was previously with Levski Sofia and had trials with Manchester City and Juventus.

Krzysztof PIATEK

Age 23 (01.07.95), Genoa (Ita) & Poland
Signed from Cracovia in his homeland in June, he has been a regular scorer in Serie A since and was on target four times in a cup game against Lecce. A highly effective centre-forward, he is sharp in the box and aerially dominant.

Musa BARROW

Age 19 (14.11.98), Atalanta (Ita) & Gambia
A prolific marksman for Atalanta's youth team – notably starring at the prestigious Viareggio tournament last year – he is a potent mix of velocity, cunning movement and composure in front of goal. Especially dangerous when running at defences from deep, he made his first-team debut for Atalanta earlier this year in an Italian Cup tie against Juventus and came off the bench to win his first senior cap in an African Nations Cup qualifier against Algeria in September.

Hassane BANDE

Age 19 (30.10.98), Ajax (Hol) & Burkina Faso
The much-coveted left-winger or striker joined the Amsterdam club from Belgian side Mechelen this summer for €8.25m. However, he broke a fibula in pre-season and is not expected to return until after Christmas.

Nemanja RADONJIC

Age 22 (15.02.96), Marseille (Fra) & Serbia
Has had an eventful start to the new season, contributing four goals to Red Star's qualification for the Champions League before sealing a €12m move from Belgrade to France. He relies on three core qualities: pace, directness and versatility. Although at his best on the left wing, he can play anywhere along the front line, but can be a little too individualistic at times and needs to be more focused in defensive mode.

Martin GRAICIAR

Age 19 (11.04.99), Fiorentina (Ita) & Czech Republic
A Fiorentina reserve at present, he is cool in front of goal, strong in the air and boasts plenty of presence. On the Italian club's books for 15 months, he was on loan at Czech outfit Slovan Liberec last term and spent the 2015-16 season playing for Arsenal's youth team.

Smail PREVLJAK

Age 23 (10.05.95), Red Bull Salzburg (Aut) & Bosnia
The Austrian top flight's most prolific marksman in the current calendar year, with goals aplenty on loan at Mattersburg and for Salzburg. Both a penalty-box predator and a busy, mobile hard runner, he has made a good recovery since suffering a torn cruciate-ligament injury three years ago.

THE VISIONARY

As *Jose Pekerman* leaves his Colombia post, Carl Worswick assesses the life and the career of one of Argentina's most influential coaches

Stumbling through his words and fighting back the tears, Jose Nestor Pekerman choked out a goodbye. After six-and-a-half years as Colombia's coach, the Argentinian had decided to call it a day. No previous Colombia boss had ever lasted as long; nobody in the history of the national team had ever been so successful.

Yet as Pekerman finished reading a solemn statement amid the fug of a press conference jammed with journalists restlessly preparing questions, the 69-year-old's mood suddenly and uncharacteristically turned.

"The amount of lies and drivel that's been said about me; few countries would do that," Pekerman fired. "It has been so disappointing."

Emotion unleashed and gloves off, he continued unabated. Pressed by Caracol Television, the domestic rights holder for the country's international games, to confirm whether the Colombian Football Federation's (FCF) version of "personal reasons" for his ▸

resignation was accurate, Pekerman again barked back: "Now's not the time to go into detail." He then paused before adding: "And I certainly wouldn't tell your channel anyway."

The normally reticent coach's barbed responses surprised many and soured what should have been a fitting send-off for the man who boasts the best results in *Los Cafeteros*' 94-year history. But the rumours of discontent had been simmering even before Colombia's World Cup penalty shoot-out defeat to England two months earlier. Most people already knew this was the end of an era.

After a brief holiday in Miami with his wife, Matilde, Pekerman returned to Bogota and waited for the phone to ring. But for two months nobody at the federation ever called; not until a few days before his contract was due to expire on August 31.

That relations had broken down between Pekerman and the FCF was no secret. Ever since FCF president Luis Bedoya handed himself in to the authorities in 2015 after admitting to taking bribes, Pekerman had lost his main confidant within the federation's seven-man ruling body.

The media had also started to gossip. Accusations were tossed at Pekerman and his agent Pascual Lezcano, an Argentinian businessman accused of using the Colombian national team to broker player transfers. Journalists disgruntled by the swamp of silence through which Pekerman had always led the national team, continued to throw their mud. But no evidence was ever found.

Stirring media frustration further was the confession of team doctor Carlos Ulloa that the press had been fed false information about player injuries throughout the World Cup. "We lied because that's part of the game," Ulloa told Fox Sports. "We knew James [Rodriguez] had no chance of playing against England."

Uncertainty and wild speculation had poisoned relations between Pekerman, the federation and certain sections of the media. But the coach's departure was mourned by the fans. His serene and humble conduct, tight professionalism and success on the pitch had changed Colombian football for the better.

Grateful...Colombia supporters thank their coach

"It's the final whistle of one of those great games you never want to end," read the editorial in Colombia's biggest newspaper, *El Tiempo*. "A decent man leaves us having earned the affection and respect of all the players."

Before Pekerman, Colombia had been a shambles. After 16 years wading in the backwaters of international football, South America's second-most populous nation was growing tired of mediocrity. But when Pekerman took over, in January 2012, he immediately made a break with the past. Fans, journalists, agents, entrepreneurs and the meddling influences of the old-boys network at the FCF were immediately locked out of the national-team camp.

> "The amount of lies and drivel that's been said about me; few countries would do that. It has been so disappointing"
>
> **Addressing the media during his resignation speech**

With Bedoya as his only interlocutor with the outside world, Pekerman went to extreme lengths to maintain discipline and concentration. For most of the year nobody even knew where he was.

He began his reign with a win and then a loss, against Peru and Ecuador, but the performances were unconvincing and the media was already on his back.

Dragging the team off to Spain in August 2012, he chose to sacrifice the option of using the FIFA window to play friendlies in favour of daily training sessions behind closed doors. "Insanity!" screamed one of the country's top football journalists.

Yet a month later Colombia thumped Uruguay 4-0 to kick-start a run of four straight wins on route to qualification for Brazil 2014 in second place. In the stands in Barranquilla, the sweaty Caribbean port where Colombia choose to play their home games, "Pekerman for president" banners were regularly unfurled. His approval ratings were higher than for anyone else in the country.

No chance...James Rodriguez had to sit out the England game

In Brazil, the team swept to four straight wins and waltzed into the World Cup quarter-finals for the first time. For a country that had previously only recorded three victories in total at the finals this was something special.

Colombia were eventually bullied out of the tournament by the hosts in a tempestuous last-eight tie in Fortaleza. But Pekerman had not only made history, he had also helped cast a new light on the country's international reputation.

That positive identity, a swirl of dancing and dazzling football, was perhaps the apex of Pekerman's achievements. Post-Brazil he would struggle to overhaul the squad and maintain Colombia's level. Nevertheless, his side were still just a crossbar away from another last-eight World Cup finish in Russia this year.

In the post-mortem of his resignation, many felt it had taken a foreign eye to put Colombia's national team back on its perch. Yet the Argentinian coach was no stranger to Colombian football or the country's culture.

Back in 1975, the 25-year-old Pekerman was an undistinguished central midfielder when he signed for Deportivo Independiente Medellin. He had recently married and was carrying a knee injury.

"He wasn't super talented but he was

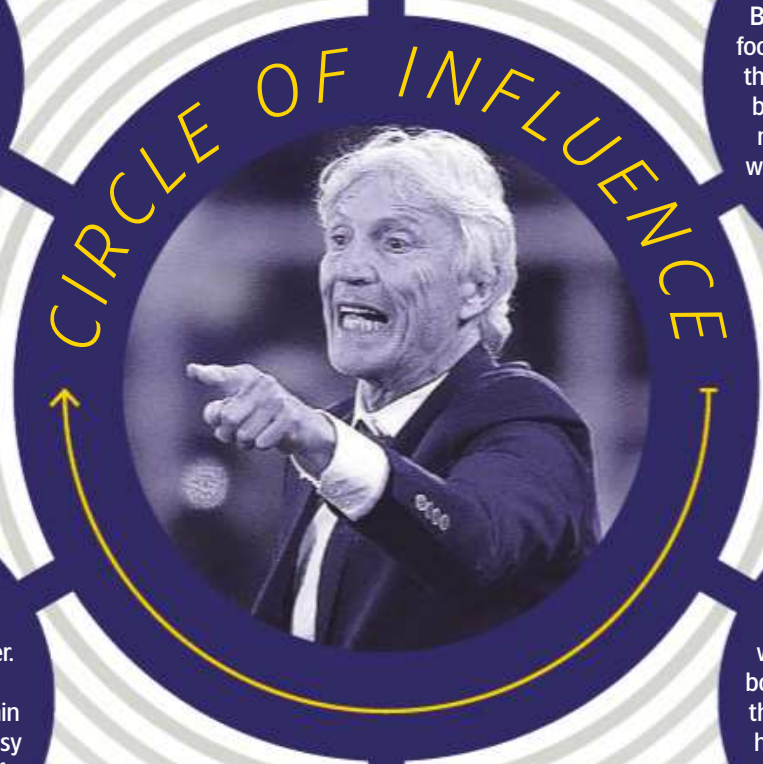
Heartbreak...defeat on penalties at the 2018 World Cup

useful and intelligent," his coach Humberto Ortiz told *Cromos* magazine. "He was the opposite of an individualist." Wearing the number eight shirt he became known as the *Hormiguita* – the "little ant".

But just two years later, and following the birth of his first daughter, Pekerman's career crunched to a halt. Sat eating breakfast one morning he jarred his dodgy knee when springing up from his chair. Despite surgery to repair torn ligaments, the knee remained inflamed and he would never play professionally again.

Returning to Argentina "to be in a place of comfort", Pekerman picked up a newspaper and saw an advert seeking taxi drivers. It was 1978, Argentina was about to host the World Cup and he had a young family to support. Just a few months after playing in front of thousands of fans, the 28-year-old borrowed a Renault 12 from his brother, Tito, and worked eight hours a day fighting his way through the Buenos Aires traffic.

Little by little he came to terms with the premature end of his 12-year playing career and began studying for a coaching badge in his spare time with Jose D'Amico, a founder member of the Argentinian FA's coaching school.



OSVALDO ZUBELDIA
Legendary Argentinian coach who convinced a despondent Pekerman to turn to coaching when his playing career was cut short at 28. "Osvaldo helped me in my toughest moment," he recalls. "He invited me for coffee and made me see it wasn't the end of the world."

ENRIQUE MERELAS
Persuaded Argentinian FA president Julio Grondona to hand the then largely unknown Pekerman his big break as coach of the national under-20 side in 1994.

CESAR LUIS MENOTTI
In the great dichotomy between Menotti and Carlos Bilardo that poisoned Argentinian football over the correct way to play the game, Pekerman borrowed the best from both schools. While his meticulous preparation methods were clearly influenced by Bilardo, his playing style leans more to the romantic idealism of Menotti.

EDUARDO URTASUN
Another member of the staff who has followed Pekerman throughout his career. Responsible for fitness and maintaining strict discipline within the camp, he courted controversy by barging Raheem Sterling off the pitch at half-time in the World Cup tie with England.

NESTOR LORENZO
Joined Pekerman's staff upon hanging up his boots and was picked as assistant when his boss accepted the Colombia job at the start of 2012. An ex-defender, he signed for English second-tier side Swindon Town just three months after playing in the 1990 World Cup Final for Argentina.

HUGO TOCALLI
Pekerman's right-hand man who helped revolutionise Argentinian youth football in the mid-1990s. Under Pekerman and Tocalli, Argentina won three Under-20 World Cups – in 1995, 1997 and 2001 – before Pekerman was promoted to take charge of the senior side, and ex-goalkeeper Tocalli led the under-20s to another title at the 2007 World Cup in Canada.

For 10 years Pekerman worked virtually unnoticed with the youth teams at Chacarita Juniors, Argentinos Juniors and then in Chile with Colo Colo. When he returned home, he would be handed his big break.

In the early 1990s Argentina's under-20s had lost their way. At the 1991 World Cup they were eliminated in the first round and a contemptible performance in a 3-0 thrashing by hosts Portugal saw the team return home in disgrace. Three men were sent off – including striker Juan Esnaider for trying to head-butt the referee – as Reinaldo Merlo's team tried to use extreme violence to halt Luis Figo and his team-mates.

FIFA suspended Esnaider for a year and banned Argentina from the next Under-20 World Cup. Merlo blamed the referee and stepped down.

Despite far more qualified candidates going for the vacant position, the AFA opted for the unknown Pekerman to root out the aggression and restructure Argentinian youth football.

Just as he would do almost two decades later in Colombia, he began by shutting the door to all outside influences, while stressing to the players that the filth and aggression of the past would no longer be tolerated.

His first big test was the 1995 South American Youth Championship, where Argentina lost in the group final to finish runners-up behind Brazil. Three months later at the Qatar finals Pekerman would have his revenge.

In Doha, at the end of April, Argentina won the Under-20 World Cup for only the second time. Pekerman had exceeded expectations and victory over old foes Brazil in the Final was the icing on the cake.

Two years later, Argentina were back for the Malaysia finals, this time as South American champions. With a 2-1 win over neighbours Uruguay in the Final, Pekerman secured successive world titles. Curiously, the young *Albicelestes* were also awarded the FIFA Fair Play Award, an unthinkable recipient just a few years earlier.

On home soil in 2001, Pekerman made it a hat-trick of World Cups and was hailed the best youth coach in the world. Again, Argentina added the fairplay trophy.

One of those who played under Pekerman is Gabriel Milito, and speaking to Colombian journalist Javier Hernandez Bonnet, the former Barcelona defender described him "as the most important coach" in his career. The backbone to

the Argentinian's success, Milito added, was the coach's meticulous approach to the game: "He has never done a single thing in his life without carefully analysing absolutely everything."

It was this fine attention to respecting a serious process, constructed gradually over time, that was behind Pekerman's decision to twice turn down his country, in 1998 and 2002.

"If you want success you need at least 10 years building a project," he would explain years later.

> "He has never done a single thing in his life without carefully analysing absolutely everything"
>
> **Former Argentina defender Gabriel Milito**

Instead, he became Argentina's general manager, working alongside senior coach Marcelo Bielsa – until 2004 when *El Loco* unexpectedly quit. At the third time of asking, Pekerman finally gave in and led Argentina at the 2006 World Cup.

After scoring six against Serbia – with Esteban Cambiasso's strike coming at the end of a sumptuous 26-touch move – Argentina stormed out of Group C before beating Mexico 2-1 in extra-time in the second round.

Against the host nation Germany in the quarter-finals, Argentina were leading with 11 minutes left to play. Pekerman had already decided to close the game down, taking off playmaker Juan Riquelme, and then, with his final change, throwing on the tall Julio Cruz to tackle Germany's height.

Leadership...extra time in the 2006 World Cup last-16 game against Mexico

But a minute later Germany equalised from a Miroslav Klose header before winning 4-2 on penalties. And all the while, 19-year-old prodigy Lionel Messi remained slumped on the bench, arms crossed, face creased with frustration.

To this day many still haven't forgiven Pekerman for ignoring Messi.

"What do we have to do so that these decisions aren't only taken by the coach?" AFA president Julio Grondona fumed straight after the game. Pekerman immediately resigned.

A few years later the wily boss would be afforded a wry smile. When Messi won his first Ballon d'Or in 2009, he dedicated the award to his former coach. "This is for Pekerman," Messi said arms aloft. "He gave me a lot of advice that I will never forget."

The special relationship between Messi and Pekerman had actually started many years earlier when the coach was serving as sporting director at Spanish second division side Leganes in 2003.

Pekerman had one day decided to travel to Alcorcon on the outskirts of Madrid to watch Messi play for the first time. Speaking to coach Gines Menendez after the game, the Spain under-16s coach dropped a throwaway line that piqued Pekerman's interest: "It's just a shame he's not yet Spanish."

Pekerman immediately rang his old assistant Hugo Tocalli, who was by then in the Argentina under-20 hot-seat and who convinced Grondona to arrange an impromptu friendly.

Against Paraguay, in June 2004, Argentina scored eight times in front of just 200 fans. Five days after his 17th birthday, Messi bagged the seventh and the *Albiceleste* secured the future of one of football's greatest talents.

Again Pekerman's long-term vision had produced results. His patient approach tied to behind-the-scenes hard work has, unsurprisingly, lent itself more to the international game. Indeed, Pekerman's only dalliance with club football came from 2007 to 2009 during two stints in Mexico with Toluca and Tigres. Neither was a roaring success.

Now, just like post-Mexico, he will take time out to be with his family. Aged 69, he perhaps has one big project left. An anomaly in the modern game he might be, but for building legacies rather than chasing short-term fixes, there are few coaches that can match Pekerman's pedigree. WS

Success...Argentina celebrate winning the Under-20 World Cup in 2001

WorldSoccer®

Global football intelligence

SERIOUS OPINION
Hard-hitting opinions from the game's most respected writers.

EXPERT ANALYSIS
Football's burning issues analysed by expert figures in the game.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS
Face to face with football's biggest names.

COMPETITION GUIDES
Essential previews of football's biggest tournaments.

TALENT SCOUT
Spotlight on the talented youngsters tipped for the top.

EYEWITNESS REPORTS
News and features from our global network of correspondents.

Subscribe to World Soccer from just £19.99, saving 35% (worldsoccersubs.co.uk/12NH)

facebook.com/WorldSoccerMagazine

@worldsoccermag

www.worldsoccer.com

International newcomers

Nick Bidwell selects some of the most impressive performers from September's games

1 Ethan AMPADU

WALES

After featuring in cup games for Chelsea latest season, the 18-year-old has yet to even make the bench under new boss Maurizio Sarri this term. But Wales' Ryan Giggs has no such reservations, handing him a competitive debut in central midfield in September's Nations League games. He impressed in a 4-1 win against the Republic of Ireland and earned praise for his performance in the 2-0 loss to Denmark.

"He's a talented player. So balanced, so mature for such a young player," says Giggs. "He's going to be a magnificent player."

The son of a Ghanaian father and Welsh mother, he left Exeter City for Chelsea at 16, having represented England at under-16 level. A broken ankle in March set him back and he now faces the same struggle for first-team recognition in the Premier League as Ruben Loftus-Cheek.

2 Dani CEBALLOS

SPAIN

The midfielder spent most of last season at Real Madrid frustrated by a lack of game time under Zinedine Zidane following a move from Real Betis. But after "Zizou" quit in May and former national boss Julen Lopetegui took over, the 22-year-old has established himself as a key first-team figure at the Bernabeu.

His elevated status was confirmed with his international debut and a bravura performance in the 6-0 hammering of Croatia in the Nations League. New Spain coach Luis Enrique describes him as "a one-in-a-million sort of player" and against the World Cup finalists he was dynamic and industrious. In the thick of the action, he even managed to shackle opposition playmaker Luka Modric while driving his side forward and taking risks.

"He's different, he's special," gushed Enrique afterwards. "He can do it all. He doesn't give the ball away, works well under pressure, beats people, provides a final pass and puts himself about physically."

3 Frenkie DE JONG
HOLLAND

Only an ankle injury in the second-half of last season prevented the Ajax starlet winning his first cap sooner, but that moment finally arrived for the 21-year-old against France in Paris.

Rated in the €50m bracket, he has come to the attention of Barcelona and Manchester City for his performance in the libero role for his club side, stylishly bringing the ball out from the back. But he insists midfield is his real vocation – and it's a view shared by Holland coach Ronald Koeman.

From a family of Feyenoord fans, he had the chance to join their junior ranks but opted for Willem II's academy. "We told Frenkie to choose the club where he felt the most comfortable and that was Willem II," explained his mother Marion. One can only imagine what she said when he joined Ajax at 18...

4 RICHARLISON
BRAZIL

Brazil boss Tite opted to call up several youngsters for the recent friendlies against the USA and El Salvador, including Manchester United's Andreas Pereira and Artur of Barcelona, as well as Flamengo's attacking midfielder Lucas Paqueta, Fluminense striker Pedro, Gremio winger Everton and Porto centre-back Felipe.

However, it was wide attacker Richarlison who made the headlines, coming on as a late sub against the USA and then scoring twice in a 5-0 rout of El Salvador in Maryland.

The former Fluminense star's rapid rise in the Premier League has taken many in Brazil by surprise. But he has benefitted from the attacking approach of coach Marco Silva, first at Watford and now Everton, and he is firmly on Tite's radar.

5 Nico SCHULZ
GERMANY

A game-winning scorer on his debut for the Nationalmannschaft against Peru, the 25-year-old Hoffenheim wing-back could not have wished for a better full baptism for his country – and all in front of a familiar audience at his club side's Rhein-Neckar-Arena.

He has, however, had his darker moments. During an ill-fated spell at Borussia Monchengladbach virtually everything that could go wrong did go wrong, and after torn cruciate ligaments in his left knee kept him out for almost nine months, his form was totally unconvincing on his return.

Happily for the Berliner his luck changed on moving to Hoffenheim in 2017 when, rather than use him as a conventional left-back, coach Julian Nagelsmann thought him far better suited to the role of flank raider. And how effective he has proved in that task, with his incisive breaks and accurate crosses.

6 Marko LIVAJA
CROATIA

A NextGen Series winner with Internazionale in 2012, his career has been anything but a smooth ride, with unproductive spells at Russian side Rubin Kazan and Atalanta – where a training-ground fight with a team-mate and a row with coach Stefano Colantuono saw him suspended at one point.

Now 25, he is back on track in Greece, where he won the title with AEK last term, and with his homeland, for whom he made his senior bow in a 1-1 draw with Portugal.

At his best as a support striker, he is mobile, intelligent and makes good, late runs into the box. His other strong suit is a commitment to the cause that saw him likened to Wayne Rooney by Marco Giampaolo, his coach at Empoli.

Glenn Moore

Courage break the hoodoo

Shield winners claim championship title

North Carolina Courage shook off the "curse" that has afflicted the winners of the National Women's Soccer League Shield to double up with the Championship title following victory over defending champions Portland Thorns.

Courage did not just become the first regular-season winners to successfully negotiate the play-off series. They did so with a 3-0 win on their opponents' own ground, Providence Park, which had been chosen to host the championship game well in advance.

Jess McDonald, traded by Portland three years ago, was named MVP after scoring twice in the Final after Brazil's Debinha opened the scoring for Paul Riley's team, who were beaten by Thorns in last season's finale.

Portland staged all three play-off matches as the impact of Hurricane Florence forced Courage to give up their home semi-final. Thorns beat Seattle Reign 1-0 on the Sunday, Courage then defeated Chicago Red Stars 2-0 on the Tuesday.

Despite three days less preparation time – and a largely hostile crowd of 21,144 – Courage maintained their record-breaking season to finish the campaign with 19 wins, one defeat and a goal difference of 58-17.

North Carolina's success concluded another year of mixed messages. On the credit side, NWSL survived another year. With six seasons completed, this third attempt to establish a professional women's league in the US has now lasted as long as the previous two combined. Average regular-season gates reached a record high of 6,024 as newcomers Utah Royals established themselves as the league's second-best supported club, behind Thorns, sustaining attendances around the 10,000-mark even without reaching the play-offs.

However, both Houston Dash and Orlando Pride, who parted company with coaches Vera Pauw and Tom Sermanni respectively at the end of the campaign, recorded their lowest averages.

The biggest cloud hovers over Sky Blue, a fixture in the US women's football landscape since 2009 when they won the Championship in the inaugural season of Women's Professional Soccer. That is as good as it has got for the New Jersey-based franchise. In eight subsequent WPS and NWSL seasons Sky Blue have failed to better their first season average attendance of 3,651. Only once have they made the play-offs and this season they did not win a game until the last weekend of the season.

By then word was out that the players had, for some time, been enduring sub-standard facilities. There have been problems with accommodation, with players often having to move several times in a season between host families. Their home ground lacks basic amenities, while training has been held at four different venues. Expenses have been paid late, if at all, and away games have featured red-eye flights, cramped mini-buses and inappropriate meal stops.

An investigation by US sports news website Deadspin quoted a former assistant coach saying of one players' house "you would not let your dogs sleep in it", adding players "had to cardboard up the windows [and] had plastic bags for windows; it was the most disgusting place you've ever seen in your life".

Former US keeper Hope Solo said: "Our team never showered post-game at Sky Blue, which is neither hygienic nor healthy. At times, our coach would not even allow us to train because the grass fields were not lined or not safe."

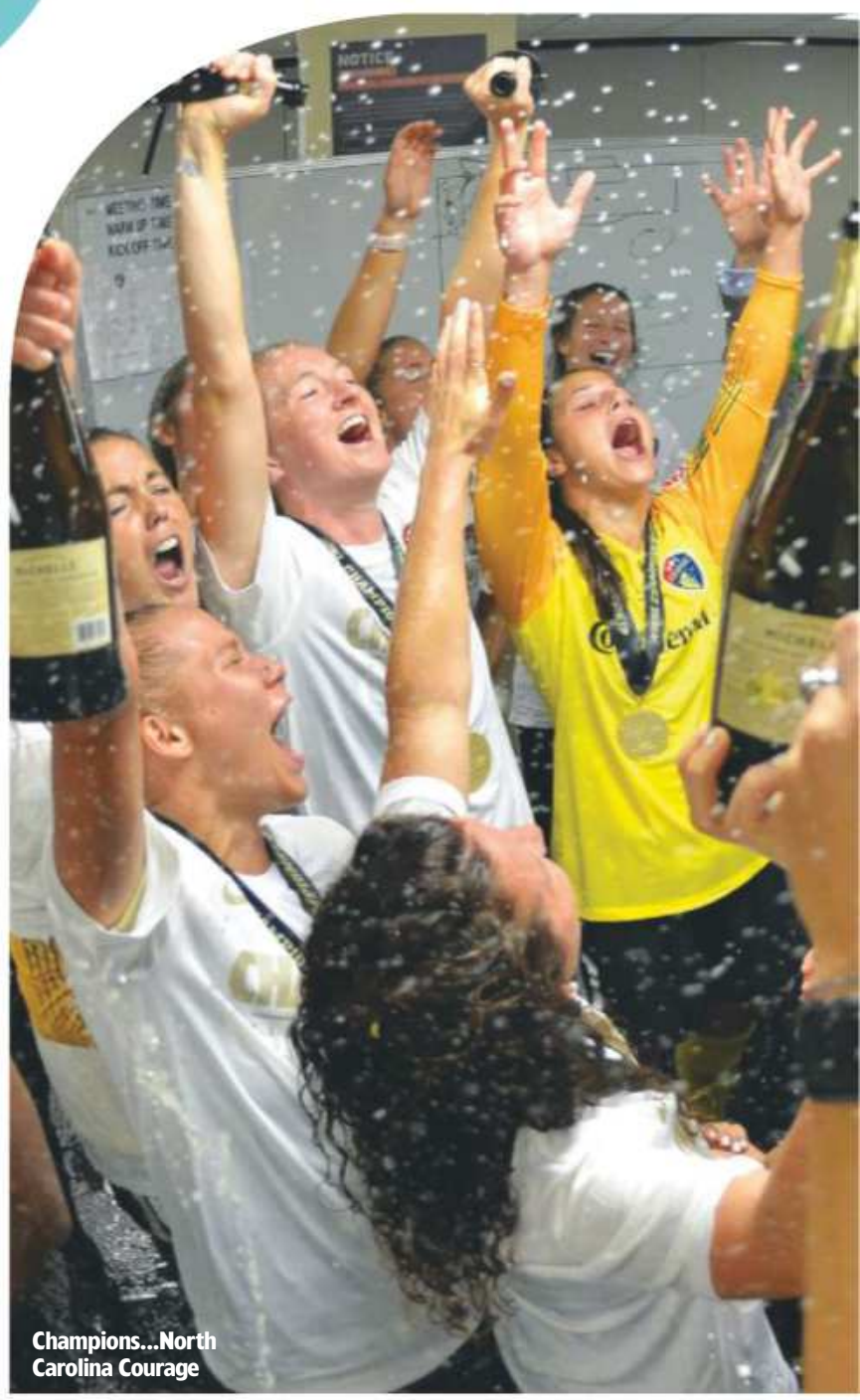
After scoring the only goal in the final game against Orlando two-time FIFA World Player of the Year Carli Lloyd said some of the problems were "pretty shocking". Sky Blue subsequently made "emergency improvements", which turned out to be a motorhome with a small shower and portable toilets.

While Solo said Sky Blue was "always the worst" she added it was not the only inadequate venue. Solo told Deadspin co-author Erica L Ayala: "My own team in Seattle didn't have a very sanitary locker room."

That NWSL has been without a commissioner since March 2017 has not helped scrutiny of facilities, but the league's basic problem is a lack of revenue and investment.

This is not yet a sport which makes money for owners. Tax returns reveal New Jersey governor Phil Murphy, who co-owns Sky Blue with retail multi-millionaire Steven Tamares, has lost

> "Our team never showered post-game at Sky Blue, which is neither hygienic nor healthy"
>
> Former USA goalkeeper Hope Solo



Champions...North Carolina Courage

Final venue ...Providence Park in Portland

Return...Carli Lloyd is back with Sky Blue

$5million on the franchise. Meanwhile, talk of expansion – to Los Angeles, Atlanta or Vancouver – has gone quiet.

Long term, NWSL has a problem if the sport in North America treads water, for in Europe it is growing apace.

For someone like Lloyd, returning to Sky Blue for the first time since 2010 after playing for Manchester City, where facilities are top class, it's a culture shock.

Having come home Lloyd, 36, intends to stay but younger players will now be tempted across the Atlantic.

At present the lure of the US national team keeps the best players Stateside but once the 2020 Olympics are over there could be an exodus with no major USWNT competition to keep players committed until the 2023 World Cup. WS

Round-up

Debut...Scotland (in blue) are off to the finals

Victorious...North Carolina Courage

Dream start... Manchester United

FIVE MORE FOR THE WORLD CUP

In a gripping climax to the European group stage, England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden and Germany all clinched their places at the 2019 Women's World Cup, while Euro 2017 finalists Holland and Denmark were pitched into a play-off series from which only one team will reach France. The pair will play over two legs for the right to meet Belgium or Switzerland in the November Final.

England won 3-0 in Newport to end the dreams of a Welsh team that did not concede until the last 33 minutes of a 12-hour qualifying campaign.

Norway, still without star player Ada Hegerberg, who is in self-imposed exile, beat Holland 2-1 in Oslo.

Sweden, needing a draw, won 1-0 in Denmark, while Germany won 2-0 in Reykjavik to edge past Iceland but they must wait a little longer for new coach Martina Voss-Tecklenberg. She is currently at the helm of Switzerland who lost in Scotland then drew in Poland to allow the former to qualify for the first time.

Former Denmark boss Nils Nielsen will replace her as Switzerland coach.

Retired... Lotta Schelin

SCHELIN RETIRES

Sweden's record goalscorer Lotta Schelin has retired due to injury.

Schelin, 34, scored 88 goals in 185 internationals, winning Olympic silver in 2016 and the Euro 2013 Golden Boot.

At club level, she won three Champions League titles with Lyon.

HUGE WINS FOR NEW CLUBS

The 12-0 win Manchester United achieved against Aston Villa in their first league match was soon eclipsed by another new club as Benfica thrashed Ponte de Frielas 28-0 in Portugal.

Both clubs are in the second tier, but instant promotions seem assured.

In the English top flight, Liverpool began with a 5-0 defeat at Arsenal, after which manager Neil Redfearn quit.

KVINNER WIN AGAIN

LSK Kvinner, from Lillestrom, won their fifth successive Norwegian title, wrapping up the Toppserien with five matches to spare.

DISPUTE OVER IN ITALY? MAYBE

The impasse in Italy appeared to be resolved when CONI, the country's highest sports regulator, ruled that the national federation (FIGC) did have the right to take over the running of the top two divisions of women's football from the amateur federation (LND).

Seeking to professionalise the sport, the leading clubs, had backed FIGC. However, LND argued that there was a conflict of interest among the adjudicators and threatened further action.

Impasse... Italy's Juventus

PROGRAMMES

FREE

FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES

To receive a FREE programme plus a copy of our latest catalogue (listing several thousand different mint condition Big Match, League, Scottish, Irish, Foreign and Non-League teams programmes etc.) please send your name and address to:

STEVE EARL FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES (DEPT.WS)
BROAD STREET, BUNGAY, SUFFOLK, NR351AH, ENGLAND

or phone 01986 892621 or visit www.footballprogs.co.uk

The 2018 World Cup Final (Croatia v France) £15 (inc.p&p)

(Credit/Debit Cards & PayPal accepted)

MISCELLANEOUS

No surgery
No Medication
No Risk
No Complication

Advanced Hair Regrowth Clinic (London)

2 Latitude House Oval Road NW1 7EU

Call now to book your appointment at +44 7918528880

or

Email to ngmilly@gmail.com

www.advancedhairregrowth.com

1. Stop Hair Loss
2. Revitalize Hair Follicle to start to grow hair
3. Strengthen & Volumize existing Hair

World Service

NOW INCORPORATING Global diary

Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents

67

STEVE MENARY
Guinea-Bissau

70

GAVIN HAMILTON
UEFA Nations League

68

SIMON HILL
Australia

72

MARK GLEESON
Africa

PLUS

70

Silva service...Portugal get the better of Italy

DIARY

66 Comprehensive global news

RESULTS, TABLES, FIXTURES

74 Internationals
78 Club football

SQUADS

80 Spain: La Liga

72

Last four... ES Setif (left) progress

AUGUST 29-SEPTEMBER 27, 2018

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

Wednesday August 29

CONMEBOL: Ex-confederation president Juan Angel Napout is jailed for nine years for racketeering conspiracy and wire-fraud charges.
ITALY: Udinese midfielder Rolando Mandragora is suspended for one game after being caught by TV cameras making "blasphemous remarks" at the weekend after he had a shot saved by Sampdoria goalkeeper Emil Audero.

Thursday August 30

LUXEMBOURG: Dudelange beat Romanian champions CFR Cluj in the Europa League and become the first team from Luxembourg to reach the group stage of a major European competition.

Friday August 31

FRANCE: Patrick Vieira claims his first victory as Nice coach with a 1-0 triumph at Lyon.
ITALY: Milan beat Roma 2-1 with a 95th-minute goal from sub Patrick Cutrone after both sides have a goal disallowed by VAR.
SERBIA: Red Star fans will be able to attend their opening Champions League group game, at home to Napoli, after UEFA reduces their two-game stadium ban on appeal.

Saturday September 1

ASIAN GAMES: South Korea beat Japan 2-1 in the men's Final.
FRANCE: Kylian Mbappe is sent off late on in Paris Saint-Germain's 4-2 win at Nimes.
HOLLAND: PSV maintain their perfect start in the Eredivisie with a 6-1 win over Willem II.
USA: Zlatan Ibrahimovic and LA Galaxy are thrashed 6-2 away at Real Salt Lake.

Sunday September 2

BRAZIL: Following a 1-1 draw with Atletico Mineiro, a hostage is taken in the Corinthians club shop – and then abandoned – as three men try to rob the premises.
FRANCE: Marseille come from 2-1 down to beat Monaco 3-2 with a 90th-minute winner from Valere Germain.
ITALY: Carlo Ancelotti suffers a first defeat as Napoli coach as his side lose 3-0 at Sampdoria.
RUSSIA: Zenit's perfect start to the season ends with a 0-0 draw at home to Spartak Moscow in a game that is interrupted when a drone crashes onto the pitch.
SCOTLAND: Steven Gerrard loses for the first time as a manager as Rangers go down 1-0 at Celtic.
SPAIN: La Liga newcomers Huesca take the lead at Barcelona before being thrashed 8-2. Real Betis beat city rivals Sevilla 1-0.

Monday September 3

ENGLAND: Tottenham Hotspur confirm their Champions League group games will be played at Wembley Stadium.
IRAQ: Previously in charge of Slovenia (twice), Macedonia and United Arab Emirates, Srecko Katanec replaces Basim Qasim in charge of Iraq.
PARAGUAY: Former Mexico coach Juan Carlos Osorio will lead Paraguay in their qualifying campaign for the 2022 World Cup.
SCOTLAND: St Mirren, who are second-bottom of the Premiership sack manager Alan Stubbs after less than three months in charge.
SPAIN: Brazil's former World Cup winner Ronaldo buys a 51 per cent controlling stake in Real Valladolid, who are 16th in La Liga and yet to win a game this season.

Tuesday September 4

AUSTRALIA: The country's all-time top scorer Tim Cahill, who managed 50 goals in 107 games before announcing his international retirement at this summer's World Cup, will make one last appearance for Australia when they meet Lebanon in Sydney in November.
COLOMBIA: Jose Pekerman steps down as Colombia coach after six-and-a-half years in charge, with Arturo Reyes taking charge of the side for the friendlies against Venezuela and Argentina.
DENMARK: Ex-Arsenal midfielder John Jensen, who was a Euro champion in 1992, will be in charge for the national side's upcoming games against Slovakia and Wales after coach Age Hareide is stood down by the Danish FA amid a dispute with the players' union over commercial rights.
HOLLAND: Ajax and Morocco

Golden...South Korea celebrate beating Japan in the Final of the men's football tournament at the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia

Old Firm...Celtic's Olivier Ntcham (left) and Alfredo Morelos of Rangers

midfielder Hakim Ziyech wins the Dutch footballer of the year award.

Wednesday September 5

DENMARK: With the national team involved in a dispute with the Danish Football Association, and players from the country's top two divisions and those based overseas making themselves unavailable, Denmark field a makeshift side against Slovakia and lose 3-0.

FRANCE: Eleven years after he was last in charge of Bordeaux, Brazilian coach Ricardo Gomes returns to replace Gus Poyet, who was sacked following a row with the board over the sale of striker Gaetan Laborde to Ligue 1 rivals Montpellier.

NIGERIA: Salisu Yusuf, who was assistant to Gernot Rohr at the World Cup, is banned for a year by the Nigeria Football Federation after being caught on camera taking cash from two men who ➤

Caught...Salisu Yusuf has been banned

Guinea-Bissau

STEVE MENARY

High point...taking on Burkina Faso (in white) in the African Nations Cup

Clubs go on strike

Domestic league on hold due to federation cash dispute

A rebellion by clubs in Guinea-Bissau is threatening to prevent the new season kicking off in November, with a swathe of sides, led by last term's double winners Sport Bissau e Benfica (SBB), refusing to take part in the domestic league over what they perceive to be a misuse of funds by the Football Federation of Guinea-Bissau (FFGB).

"All the federation do is eat the money," fumes SBB director general Serifo Sow. "We have 40 clubs that are not in agreement with the administration of the federation. FIFA are sending a lot of money to the federation. They send them money for futsal, but the federation never organised this, and competitions in schools, but this modality has not been organised in Guinea-Bissau either."

Federation accounts show that $178,182 was spent on general planning, $145,405 on generators, $47,851 on travel and expenses, and $26,333 on bus transportation. "A big generator in Guinea-Bissau can cost $20,000 but we don't see these generators," claims Sow.

The clubs' ire is aimed at federation president Manuel Nascimento Lopes, who has two years left on his term of office and has come in for criticism before.

In 2017, former FFGB vice-president Inum Embalo questioned Lopes about the federation's spending, but Lopes dismissed it all as "speculation and lies", adding: "It's political propaganda against me because I do not agree to join some political movement."

In February the federation did cover the air fare for a party of 24 people to enable SBB to travel abroad and take part in the CAF Champions League.

The last club from Guinea-Bissau to play in the tournament was Os Balantas, in 2010, and they were knocked out 3-0 on aggregate by Morocco's Difaa El Jadida. Oddly, SBB also faced Difaa El Jadida in this year's preliminary round and they were crushed 10-0 in Morocco, where Sow says they had to pay for their own accommodation.

The clubs are also challenging what they feel is the paltry level of prize money in the local league, where the winners get just $8,700.

Sow says: "We try to contact FIFA but they say they will only talk to the federation, not the clubs. Always FIFA send money but we don't see where it is spent. So we suspect some people know what is going on with the federation."

Last year Guinea-Bissau reached their first major finals, qualifying for the African Nations Cup, but that success came about by using players who are with clubs overseas, with many of the squad recruited from former colonial power Portugal, which gave Guinea-Bissau independence in 1974.

> "All the federation do is eat the money"
> SBB director general Serifo Sow

Playing abroad is the dream for domestic players, who typically play for no money at home.

Causo Seidi, president of second-tier side SD Mansaba, says: "The clubs promise when they sign an agreement or contract [to pay players], but the reality is no club has the conditions to do it. Some clubs accommodate players and give them food and bonus; some clubs do not. The players want to play because that way they can get an opportunity to move on."

Unless the impasse can be solved, Guinea-Bissau's local players do not look like playing at all. WS

Australia

SIMON HILL

Victory the team to beat

Defending champions look stronger than ever

When the going get tough, the tough must get going. And embattled employees of Australian football's governing body, the FFA, have certainly had it tough over the last few months. The battle for control of the game – the FFA has been at loggerheads with A-League clubs for the best part of three years – has had a big impact on public interest in the game, so reviving its fortunes is of the utmost importance.

The signs, however, are promising, and a reworked central marquee fund had its first major success, with Keisuke Honda arriving at defending champions Melbourne Victory. Honda will double up his playing role with a coaching position with Cambodia's national team and the arrival of the Japanese star is probably the A-League's biggest coup since Alessandro Del Piero joined Sydney in 2012.

Not content with one World Cup player, Victory quickly added a second, with Swedish striker Ola Toivonen refusing overtures from Swansea City to move down under. They also signed ex-Stuttgart defender Georg Neidermeier and look well equipped for another title tilt, even allowing for the loss of the A-League's record goalscorer, Besart Berisha.

Victory's perennial rivals Sydney lost last year's golden boot winner Bobo and player of the season Adrian Mierzejewski. However, midfielder Siem De Jong has arrived from Ajax and if he can stay fit he looks an able replacement for Mierzejewski. The Sky Blues wanted Fernando Torres to replace Bobo but the Spanish striker opted for Japanese football instead, so coach Steve Corica brought in Adam Le Fondre from Bolton Wanderers. In the heart of the defence Jop Van Der Linden replaces Dutch compatriot Jordy Buijs.

Arrivals...Sydney newcomers Siem De Jong (left) and Adam Le Fondre

Central Coast Mariners raised eyebrows by inviting world sprint legend Usain Bolt to trial at the club...but he appears some way off the standard required

Trial...Usain Bolt tries to impress

Grand Finalists last year, Newcastle Jets have been relatively quiet in the transfer market, but the arrival of Brazilian forward Jair, who scored regularly in the K-League for Jeonnam Dragons, should ensure Roy O'Donovan is adequately replaced in the early part of the season. The Irishman is serving a lengthy ban for a high boot to the face of goalkeeper Lawrence Thomas in the Grand Final loss to Victory in May.

Despite the riches of the City Football Group, Melbourne City have refused to copy neighbours Victory in chasing big-name marquees, but they do have some useful-looking additions, including former Manchester United defender Ritchie De Laet, ex-Rangers striker Michael O'Halloran, French midfielder Florin Berenguer and Mark Birighitti.

Adelaide United will look to build on a promising first season under Marco Kurz without the influential

Daniel Adlung, who has returned to Germany. His place goes to compatriot Mirko Boland and Kurz has also added Denmark under-21 Ken Ilso. Michael Jakobsen moves across from Melbourne City to anchor the defence, while Socceroos Craig Goodwin and Ben Halloran are back in the fold.

Tony Popovic has returned to the A-League as coach of Perth Glory and did most of his transfer business early, with Jason Davidson, Matt Spiranovic and Chris Ikonomidis joining veteran striker Brendon Santalab and import Juande as the pick of the bunch. Diego Castro returns for a third season in purple and Glory could be set for their most exciting season in years.

Popovic's former club Western Sydney Wanderers start with Markus Babbel as their fourth coach in 12 months. The German has plundered his homeland to recruit defender Patrick Ziegler and exciting playmaker Alexander Baumjohann.

Brisbane Roar flirted with the possibility of signing ex-Arsenal midfielder Mathieu Flamini but the deal fell through. Adam Taggart has made the move across from Perth and winger Tobias Mikkelsen – who appeared for Denmark at Euro 2012 – has made the switch from Nordsjaelland.

Wellington Phoenix are under new leadership in the shape of Mark Rudan, whose statement signing

Suspended... Roy O'Donovan clashes with keeper Lawrence Thomas

is the former Newcastle United defender Steven Taylor. However, Rudan's reign got off to an inauspicious start, as the 'Nix were beaten by semi-pro outfit Bentleigh Greens in the FFA Cup.

Last year's wooden spooners Central Coast Mariners raised eyebrows by inviting world sprint legend Usain Bolt to trial at the club. The Jamaican has been given an "indefinite" period in which to prove his worth, but while his debut appearance brought nearly 10,000 to the Mariners picturesque home in Gosford he appears some way off the standard required.

New Mariners coach Mike Mulvey has added some real firepower in Ross McCormack, who has joined on loan from Aston Villa, and winger Tommy Oar, who mutually terminated his contract with APOEL in Cyprus. Burnley midfielder Aiden O'Neill also arrives on loan. WS

➤ requested that he pick two players for this year's African Nations Championship.

SPAIN: La Liga pushes ahead with its plan to take matches to the USA, with reports claiming the first game will be between Barcelona and Girona in Miami on January 27.

USA: David Beckham's MLS team will be called Club Internacional de Futbol Miami, or Inter Miami.

Thursday September 6

BRAZIL: National coach Tite scraps his rotation policy and announces that Neymar will be his side's permanent captain.

FRANCE: Playing their first game since beating Croatia in the World Cup Final, *Les Bleus* are held to a goalless draw by Germany.

GEORGIA: Giorgi Chakvetadze scores the first-ever goal in the UEFA Nations League as Georgia win 2-0 away to Kazakhstan.

JAPAN: Friday's home friendly against Chile is cancelled after an earthquake strikes the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido.

MEXICO: Second-tier side Dorados de Sinaloa appoint Diego Maradona as coach.

Friday September 7

ARGENTINA: Giovanni Simeone, the son of Diego Simeone, scores on his debut as Argentina beat Guatemala 3-0.

DENMARK: The Danish Football Association reaches a temporary agreement for the country's senior players to return to the national team to face Wales on Sunday.

NORTHERN IRELAND: Oran Kearney leaves top-of-the-table Coleraine to take charge of Scottish Premiership strugglers St Mirren.

SCOTLAND: Alex McLeish's side lose 4-0 to Belgium at Hampden Park – Scotland's heaviest defeat at home for 45 years.

SERBIA: Red Star supporters are banned from attending their side's Champions League games away to Paris Saint-Germain and Liverpool following the poor behaviour of fans in Austria at their qualifier against Red Bull Salzburg.

Saturday September 8

BURUNDI: Former England under-21 striker Saido Berahino scores on his debut for Burundi as they draw 1-1 with Gabon in an African Nations Cup qualifier.

EGYPT: Mohamed Salah misses two penalties but still manages to get on the scoresheet twice as Egypt beat Niger 6-0.

CAMEROON: Clarence Seedorf makes a disappointing debut as coach of Cameroon, who are held to a 1-1 draw by Comoros.

Sunday September 9

CANADA: An 8-0 victory over the US Virgin Islands in the CONCACAF Nations League is Canada's biggest-ever win.

ECUADOR: Emelec beat Barcelona 2-0 in the *Clasico del Astillero* ("the shipyard derby") and replace their Guayaquil neighbours at the top of the table.

FRANCE: Former Saint-Etienne defender William Gomis, 19, who was released this summer, is shot dead in the south of France.

GERMANY: Nico Schulz scores an 85th-minute winner on his debut as Germany come from behind to beat Peru 2-1 in a friendly.

JORDAN: Ex-Belgian international Vital Borkelmans replaces Lamal Abu Abed as national coach.

MADAGASCAR: At least one person is killed and 37 injured in a stampede before Madagascar's African Nations Cup game against Senegal. The game goes ahead as planned and finishes 2-2.

VIETNAM: Hoang Vu Samson scores both goals as Hanoi beat Song Lam Nghe An 2-0 to win a fourth V.League 1 title with five games to spare.

Monday September 10

CHINA: Guus Hiddink is appointed coach of China's under-21 side.

HONG KONG: English coach Gary White, who has spent the last six-and-a-half years in Asia, leaves his post with Chinese Taipei to take charge of Hong Kong.

KOSOVO: Goals from Arber Zeneli and Atdhe Nuhiu give Kosovo a 2-0 victory over Faroe Islands in the UEFA Nations League – their first-ever competitive win.

QATAR: Despite political tensions in the region, Qatar will host next year's Gulf Cup.

TURKEY: Emre Akbaba scores twice in the closing minutes as Turkey come from 2-0 down to beat Sweden 3-2 in Solna.

USA: LA Galaxy coach Sigi Schmid steps down with six MLS games to go and is temporarily replaced by Dominic Kinnear.

Tuesday September 11

BOSNIA: Edin Dzeko surpasses Emir Spahic with his 95th appearance to become Bosnia's most-capped player and marks the occasion with the only goal of the game against Austria.

ENGLAND: Marcus Rashford gets ➤

➤ the only goal of the game as England beat Switzerland to avoid an unwanted national record of four consecutive defeats.
JAPAN: Hajime Moriyasu makes a winning start as Japan coach with a 3-0 victory over Costa Rica.
NORTHERN IRELAND: One hundred and six seconds after appearing as a sub to make his international debut, Gavin Whyte scores with his first touch as Northern Ireland beat Israel 3-0.
SCOTLAND: The Scottish FA decides to remain at Hampden Park and agrees to buy the stadium from Queen's Park when their existing lease expires in 2020.
UEFA: European Club Association president Andrea Agnelli claims that a third European club competition will start in 2021. The Europa League group stage will also be reduced from 48 teams to 32.

Wednesday September 12

GABON: Sports minister Alain Claude Bilie By-Nze announces that Spanish coach Jose Antonio Camacho's contract will not be renewed at the end of November.

Thursday September 13

FIFA: A ruling to limit the number of players that one club can lend out is under consideration by FIFA.
ITALY: Chievo are docked three points for accounting irregularities, leaving them adrift at the bottom of Serie A on minus two points.

Friday September 14

ENGLAND: Former Manchester United keeper Tim Howard, who now plays for MLS side Colorado Rapids, is part of a consortium that buys a majority stake in non-league Dagenham & Redbridge, who are managed by one-time England caretaker boss Peter Taylor.

Saturday September 15

ANGOLA: Five people are killed and seven injured in a stampede after Primeiro de Agosto's 0-0 draw with DR Congo's TP Mazembe in the African Champions League.
HOLLAND: PSV win 7-0 at Den Haag to make it 13 goals scored in their last two Eredivisie games.
ITALY: Three years after going bankrupt, Parma win in Serie A again, beating Internazionale 1-0 with a goal from Federico Dimarco – who is on loan from Inter.
MALDIVES: Despite losing to holders India in their group game, and only advancing to the knockout stage on a coin toss, Maldives beat the defending champions 2-0 ➤

UEFA Nations League

GAVIN HAMILTON

Spain back to winning ways

Europe's brand new tournament kicks off

Spain got back to winning ways under new coach Luis Enrique by beating England 2-1 at Wembley and then thrashing World Cup finalists Croatia 6-0 in Elche. Those victories put *La Roja* in a commanding position in Group A4 of UEFA's new Nations League, the competition launched to beef up the international calendar and deter the continent's big nations from taking part in high-profile friendlies.

Luis Enrique wasted no time in making his mark on the Spanish squad. With David Silva, Andres Iniesta and Gerard Pique having retired, there was no place for Koke or Jordi Alba, so youngsters were prominent – with Saul Niguez, Marco Asensio, Dani Ceballos, Jose Luis Gaya and Rodri all under 23 years of age.

Without Diego Costa, who withdrew from the squad though injury, new strikers Rodrigo and Iago Aspas gave Spain more mobility. Asensio scored a spectacular goal against Croatia and created three others, while Saul opened the scoring against Croatia and also scored at Wembley.

Croatia, who suffered their worst-ever defeat, were without the retired Danijel Subasic, Mario Mandzukic and Vedran Corluka, as well as defender Ivan Strinic following the diagnosis of a heart condition. But Luka Modric and Ivan Rakitic, who won his 100th cap in a friendly against Portugal a few days earlier, were in the side, along with in-form Anderlecht striker Ivan Santini.

"We're empty, we fell down after the World Cup. Now we have to rise up again," said Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic.

England manager Gareth Southgate stayed mostly loyal to the players who lost to Croatia in the World Cup semi-finals, but brought in defenders Luke Shaw and Joe Gomez – who both missed Russia through injury – and started Marcus Rashford in attack against Spain. He admitted his players came up short but seems no closer to finding a playmaker.

Germany and world champions France played out a goalless draw in Munich, with the visitors fielding a side almost unchanged from the World Cup Final. The exception was in goal, where Alphonse Areola stood in for the injured Hugo Lloris and made several impressive saves on his debut.

Pressure...Portugal's Andre Silva causes problems for Italy's defence

Leroy Sane was back in the Germany squad after his World Cup omission, appearing as a late substitute as Germany coach Joachim Low largely kept faith with the team that disappointed in Russia – with the notable, controversial exception of Mesut Ozil.

A few days later in Paris, France beat Holland, whose new coach Ronald Koeman gave a competitive debut to Ajax midfielder Frenkie De Jong. However, it was veteran Ryan Babel who dragged the Dutch back into the game after an early goal from Kylian Mbappe before a winner from Olivier Giroud.

In Group A2, Iceland began their new era under

Lift off...Dani Ceballos picks up Marco Asensio in celebration of Spain's third goal against Croatia

Swedish coach Erik Hamren by suffering defeats to Switzerland and Belgium. Xherdan Shaqiri scored one and set up two others in Switzerland's 6-0 victory, while Romelu Lukaku starred in Belgium's 3-0 win.

Italy, under the new management of Roberto Mancini, were the big disappointment of Group A3. Jorginho's penalty rescued a point against Poland in Bologna but they then lost 1-0 to Portugal in Lisbon. Mancini used 23 players in the two games, including nine different forwards. Mario Balotelli was heavily criticised for his performance against Poland, while Federico Chiesa struggled against the Portuguese, who rested Cristiano Ronaldo and won with a goal from former Milan striker Andre Silva.

Ukraine established a commanding lead in Group B1 after Oleksandr Zinchenko struck in injury time to claim a 2-1 win over Czech Republic. A few days later in Lviv, in a game played behind closed doors as punishment for racist behaviour by fans, a late Andriy Yarmolenko penalty secured victory over Slovakia.

World Cup heroes Denis Cheryshev and Artem Dzyuba were on target in Russia's 2-1 victory over Turkey in Trabzon. Four days later, the Turks staged a dramatic late comeback to beat Sweden 3-2.

Edin Dzeko's goal against Austria put Bosnia in the driving seat in Group B3, following an earlier 2-1 win over Northern Ireland. Wales beat Republic of Ireland 4-1 in boss Ryan Giggs' first competitive game. But against stronger opposition a few days later, Denmark ran out 2-0 winners thanks to a brace from Christian Eriksen. Finland's Teemu Pikku scored the only goal in both of his side's wins over Hungary and Estonia, while Bozhidar Kraev scored both goals as Bulgaria won 2-0 in Slovenia, with sub Radoslav Vasilev's header securing a home 1-0 win over Norway.

> "We're empty, we fell down after the World Cup. Now we have to rise up again"
> Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic.

Scotland beat Albania 2-0 in their Nations League opener, while Aleksander Mitrovic scored both of Serbia's goals in a 2-2 draw with Romania, who had earlier been held to a goalless draw with Montenegro.

Luxembourg top Group D2 after wins over Moldova and San Marino, while Kosovo got a first competitive victory with a 2-0 triumph over Faroe Islands. WS

➤ in the SAFF Championship Final.

SPAIN: Real Madrid drop their first points of the season with a 1-1 draw at Athletic Bilbao. Teenage sub Borja Garces scores a 94th-minute equaliser on his debut as Atletico Madrid draw 1-1 with Eibar.

TUNISIA: Esperance beat Etoile Sahel 2-1 in the home leg of their all-Tunisian CAF Champions League quarter-final.

USA: Zlatan Ibrahimovic joins Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo as the only active players with 500 or more senior club and international goals by scoring in LA Galaxy's 5-3 defeat by Toronto.

Sunday September 16

ENGLAND: Former England and Ipswich Town defender Kevin Beattie dies of a suspected heart attack at the age of 64.

ITALY: Cristiano Ronaldo scores his first two goals for Juventus as they beat Sassuolo 2-1.

Monday September 17

GHANA: Six more referees are banned for life by the Referees' Association of Ghana, and a further 47 for 10 years each, in the wake of an investigation into bribery.

RWANDA: Francois Regis Uwayezu and Eric Ruhamiriza of the Rwandese Association Football Federation are arrested over allegations that they tried to bribe Namibian referee Jackson Pavaza who took charge of their 2-1 loss to Ivory Coast in an African Nations Cup qualifier on September 9.

USA: Assistant coach Steve Ralston will guide San Jose Earthquakes in their last six MLS games after Mikael Stahre is sacked.

Tuesday September 18

BRAZIL: Next year's Copa America Final will be staged at the Maracana in Rio, with the opening match at the Morumbi in Sao Paulo. Games will also be played in Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte and Salvador.

ITALY: Ivan Gazidis is to leave his post as chief executive at Arsenal and take up a similar position with Milan on December 1.

SPAIN: Lionel Messi scores a record eighth Champions League hat-trick as Barcelona beat PSV 4-0, putting him one ahead of Cristiano Ronaldo.

Wednesday September 19

ARGENTINA: Boca Juniors beat Brazil's Cruzeiro 2-0 in the home leg of their Libertadores Cup quarter-final, while River Plate draw 0-0 away at Independiente in an ➤

CAF Champions League

MARK GLEESON

Down to the final four

Continental title up for grabs

Stroung...Al Ahly's Walid Soliman (right) gets ther better of Horoya's Ocansey Mandela

In more than half a century of competition, only two clubs have managed to win African club football's biggest prize back-to-back. And it will stay that way after last year's Champions League winners Wydad of Morocco were eliminated in the quarter-finals by ES Setif from neighbouring Algeria.

Winners in 2014, Setif now take on Egyptian giants Al Ahly, who are one of the two sides to have managed a successful defence of the title. In fact, Ahly have done it twice – in 2005 and 2006, and 2012 and 2013 – but of their record eight titles none have been in the last five years.

The other semi-final tie pits Esperance of Tunisia against the Angolan army club Primeiro Agosto, who have exceeded expectations with their performance this year.

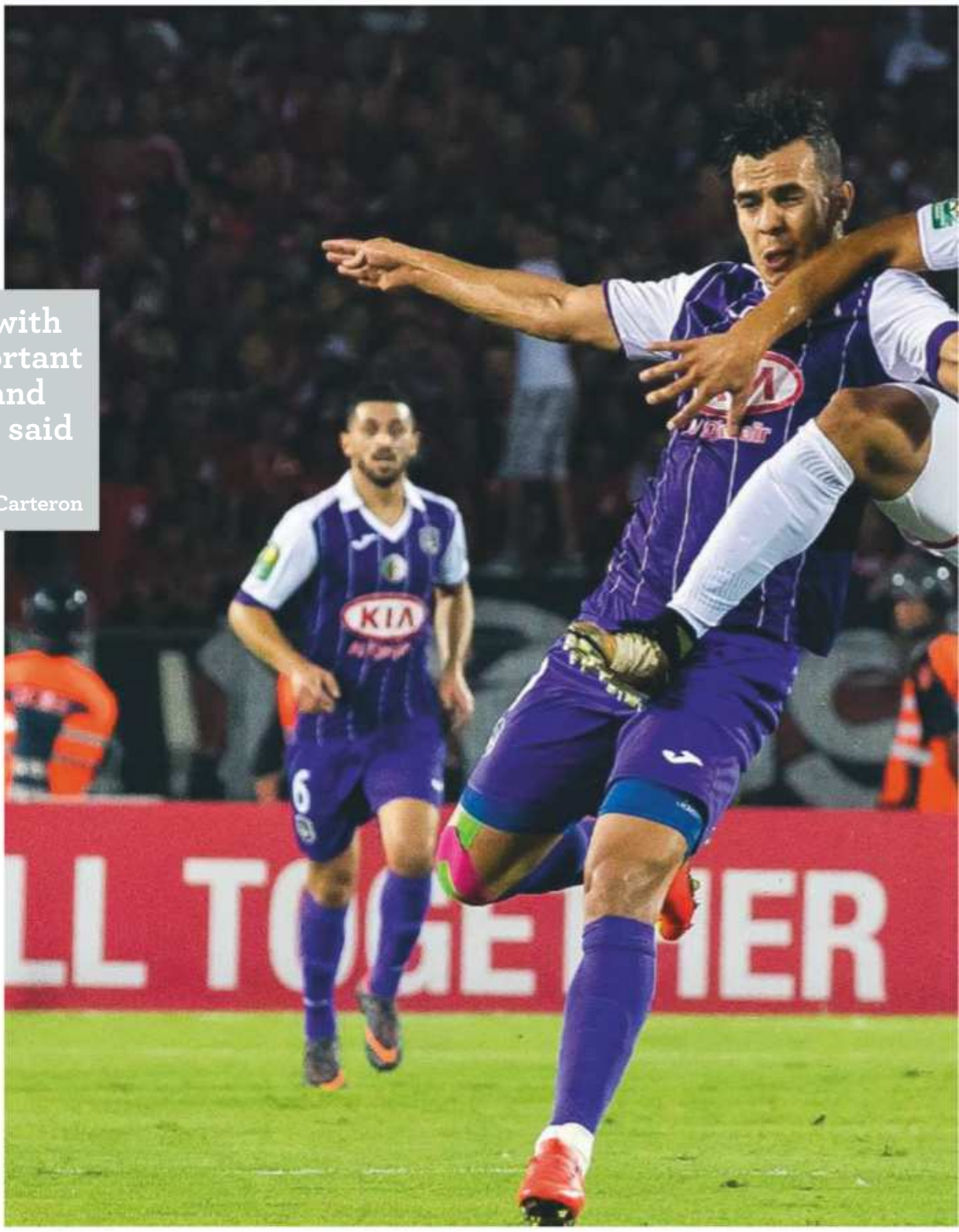
> "I won the Champions League with Mazembe and I know how important it is. When I first visited Ahly and saw the trophy in the cabinet, I said I 'want to bring it back'"
>
> Patrice Carteron

Wydad had looked convincing in the group phase, finishing top and helping to ensure that 2016 champions Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa were eliminated. But in the last eight Wydad came up against one of their former coaches – and Rachid Taoussi led Setif to a narrow 1-0 aggregate win, with the only goal of the tie coming from Senegalese import Isla Daoudi Diomande.

The 59-year-old Taoussi was in charge of Wydad some 15 years ago and this year he turned around a disastrous start to the group stage for Setif, who lost their opening pair of games but recovered to finish second behind TP Mazembe of the Democratic Republic of Congo in Group B.

Mazembe, who won the CAF Confederation Cup in 2016 and 2017, were unbeaten in the group phase but were then bundled out by Primeiro Agosto in the quarters. They looked well placed to progress after a goalless away leg in Luanda but were held 1-1 at home and eliminated on the away-goals rule. The crucial goal for the Angolans came from Mongo, but goalkeeper Tony Cabaca was the match winner after making two penalty saves.

"We were real heroes in Lubumbashi, where it is not easy to play against everything and everyone," said coach Zoran Maki afterwards. "All credit to the players who have managed to overcome a lot of adversity. We were never favourites because the opponent had much more experience than us. But we worked hard because



we dreamt of the semi-finals."

The Angolans now meet Esperance, who boast a rich pedigree at this level and have looked impressive again this year. They beat compatriots Etoile Sahel both home and away in the quarter-finals for a 3-1 aggregate win.

Ahly edged Esperance to top place in Group A, winning away in Tunis in the key tie after being held to a draw by Esperance in Cairo, and few would bet against the pair facing each other again in November's Final.

The Cairo giants have had Patrice Carteron in charge since June and already look a lot more convincing since his appointment. The former Paris Saint-Germain and Sunderland defender took Mazembe to Champions League success in 2015 and he was previously with Didier Drogba's club, Phoenix Rising, in the USA before taking the Ahly job.

"I won the Champions League with Mazembe and I know how important it is," says Carteron. "When I first visited Ahly and saw the trophy in the cabinet, I said I 'want to bring it back.'"

When the 48-year-old took the reins Ahly were struggling in the group stage, having collected a solitary point from their opening two matches but he turned matters around as they recorded four straight wins. "The players helped me and we managed to improve our results to finish as the group leaders," he adds. WS

Out...holders Wydad (in white) were knocked out by ES Setif

➤ all-Argentinian pairing.

CROATIA: Six months after Luka Modric was charged with the same offence, Dejan Lovren is accused in court of giving false statements in the trial of former Dinamo Zagreb chief executive Zdravko Mamic.

ENGLAND: Beaten 2-1 at home by Lyon, Manchester City are the first English side to lose four Champions League games in a row.

ITALY: Cristiano Ronaldo is sent off as Juventus beat Valencia 2-0.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: A 3-1 win over Fiji in the OFC Under-16 semi-finals sees Solomon Islands qualify for next year's Under-17 World Cup – their first 11-a-side FIFA tournament finals.

Thursday September 20

BRAZIL: Bruno Henrique and Dudu give Palmeiras a 2-0 win away to Chile's Colo Colo in the first leg of their Libertadores Cup quarter-final.

EUROPA LEAGUE: Arsenal, Chelsea, Milan and Sevilla all get off to winning starts in the group stage, but Marseille are beaten 3-2 at home by Eintracht Frankfurt.

Friday September 21

URUGUAY: Oscar Tabarez signs a new four-year contract to remain in charge of the national side. He will keep assistants Celso Otero, Mario Rebollo and Jose Herrera, who have worked with him since he began his second spell as coach in 2006.

Saturday September 22

GERMANY: Schalke are still without a point this season as they lose 2-0 at home to league leaders Bayern Munich.

Sunday September 23

ARGENTINA: River Plate win 2-0 away to arch-rivals Boca Juniors.

HOLLAND: PSV go five points clear of second-place Ajax at the top of the table with a 3-0 victory.

ITALY: Juventus maintain their 100 per cent start to Serie A with a 2-0 win at Frosinone.

SCOTLAND: Celtic lose 2-1 at Kilmarnock and slip to sixth in the Premiership with their worst start to a league season for 20 years.

SERBIA: Red Star draw 1-1 at Partizan and remain two points above their Belgrade neighbours, who are third on goal difference.

Monday September 24

FIFA: Luka Modric is named the world's top male player at the Best FIFA Football Awards in London. Marta of Brazil wins the best female player award and France's Didier Deschamps is the best coach.

PORTUGAL: Sporting lose in the league for the first time this season, going down 1-0 at Braga, who go second in the table behind Benfica on goal difference.

TURKEY: Fenerbahce draw 1-1 at home to Besiktas in the season's first Istanbul derby.

Tuesday September 25

ENGLAND: After taking exams at school earlier in the day, Harvey Elliott appears as a substitute for Fulham in their 3-1 League Cup win at Millwall to become the club's youngest-ever player at 15 years and 174 days.

GABON: Initially appointed as the joint-boss of Gabon, Daniel Cousin is named sole coach as Pierre-Francois Aubameyang, who is the father of Arsenal striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, is too ill to accept the job.

GERMANY: Bayern Munich drop their first points of the season with a 1-1 draw at home to Augsburg.

INDONESIA: Liga 1 is suspended after the death of a Persija fan in clashes with Persib supporters before their game on Sunday.

Wednesday September 26

GERMANY: Borussia Dortmund beat Nuremberg 7-0 to equal the club's second-biggest win of all time in the Bundesliga.

ITALY: Daniele De Rossi makes his 600th appearance for Roma as they beat Frosinone.

SPAIN: Barcelona lose 2-1 away to bottom-of-the-table Leganes while Real Madrid are beaten 3-0 at Sevilla – the first time the pair have both lost in La Liga on the same day since January 4, 2015.

USA: New York City book their place in the MLS play-offs with a 2-0 victory over Chicago Fire.

ZAMBIA: ZESCO United beat Nchanga Rangers 4-0 to retain the title with two games to spare.

Thursday September 27

GERMANY: Euro 2024 will be staged in Germany after Turkey's bid is beaten in a vote.

SCOTLAND: Scottish League Cup semi-finals Aberdeen v Rangers and Hearts v Celtic will be played at Hampden Park on October 28. It will be the first time Celtic and Rangers have played in Glasgow on the same day since 1983.

UEFA: VAR will be used from the play-off stage of next season's Champions League and in the 2019 UEFA Super Cup in Istanbul, as well as at Euro 2020. WS

Internationals

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE

Remaining group-stage fixtures (listed under respective tables) are all 2018

League A

Group A1

Sep 6 - Munich
Germany 0
France 0
Att: 67,485. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)
Germany: Neuer - Ginter, Boateng, Hummels, Rudiger, Kimmich, Kroos, Muller, Goretzka (Gundogan 66), Werner, Reus (Sane 83).
France: Areola - Pavard, Varane, Umtiti, Hernandez, Pogba, Kante, Mbappe, Griezmann (Fekir 80), Matuidi (Tolisso 86), Giroud (Dembele 66).

Sep 9 - Paris
France 2 (Mbappe 14, Giroud 75)
Holland 1 (Babel 67)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 76,452. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
France: Areola - Pavard, Varane, Umtiti, Hernandez (Mendy 62), Pogba, Kante, Mbappe, Griezmann (Nzonzi 81), Matuidi, Giroud (Dembele 89).
Holland: Cillessen - De Ligt, Van Dijk, Blind, Tete (Janmaat 82), Propper, Wijnaldum, F De Jong, Promes (Vormer 76), Depay, Babel (L De Jong 88).

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Germany	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Holland	1	0	0	1	1	2	0

Oct 13: Holland v Germany.
Oct 16: France v Germany.
Nov 16: Holland v France.
Nov 19: Germany v Holland.

Group A2

Sep 8 - St Gallen
Switzerland 6 (Zuber 13, Zakaria 23, Shaqiri 53, Seferovic 67, Ajeti 71, Mehmedi 82)
Iceland 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 14,912. **Ref:** Oliver (Eng)
Switzerland: Sommer - Mbabu, Schar, Akanji, Rodriguez, Zakaria, Xhaka, Embolo (Ajeti 65), Shaqiri, Zuber (Sow 79), Seferovic (Mehmedi 72).
Iceland: Halldorsson - Saevarsson, Ingason, R Sigurdsson, Skulason, Gislason (Sigurjonsson 74), G Sigurdsson, Palsson, B Bjarnason (E Bjarnason 65), Bodvarsson, Sigurdarson (Kjartansson 60).

Sep11 - Reykjavik
Iceland 0
Belgium 3 (E Hazard pen 29, R Lukaku 31, 81)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 9,710. **Ref:** Karasev (Rus)
Iceland: Halldorsson - Saevarsson, Ingason, R Sigurdsson, Magnusson, Sigurjonsson, B Bjarnason, Hallfredsson (Traustason 84), Skulason (Palsson 80), G Sigurdsson, Bodvarsson (Sigthorsson 70).
Belgium: Courtois - Alderweireld, Kompany, Vertonghen, Meunier, Tielemans (Dembele 80), Witsel, Carrasco (Chadli 70), Mertens, E Hazard (T Hazard 89), R Lukaku.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Switzerland	1	1	0	0	6	0	3
Belgium	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Iceland	2	0	0	2	0	9	0

Oct 12: Belgium v Switzerland.
Oct 15: Iceland v Switzerland.
Nov 15: Belgium v Iceland.
Nov 18: Switzerland v Belgium.

Group A3

Sep 7 - Bologna
Italy 1 (Jorginho pen 78)
Poland 1 (Zielinski 40)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 24,000. **Ref:** Zwayer (Ger)
Italy: Donnarumma - Zappacosta, Bonucci, Chiellini, Biraghi, Gagliardini, Jorginho, Pellegrini (Bonaventura 46), Bernardeschi, Balotelli (Belotti 61), Insigne (Chiesa 71).
Poland: Fabianski - Bereszynski, Glik, Bednarek, Reca, Krychowiak, Klich (Szymanski 55), Kurzawa, Zielinski (Linetty 66), Blaszczykowski (Pietrzak 80), Lewandowski.

Sep10 - Lisbon
Portugal 1 (Andre Silva 48)
Italy 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 52,635. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Joao Cancelo, Pepe, Ruben Dias, Mario Rui, Pizzi (Renato Sanches 74), Ruben Neves, William Carvalho (Sergio Oliveira 86), Bernardo Silva, Andre Silva, Bruma (Gelson Martins 77).
Italy: Donnarumma - Lazzari, Caldara, Romagnoli, Criscito (Emerson 74), Chiesa, Cristante (Belotti 79), Jorginho, Bonaventura, Zaza, Immobile (Berardi 59).

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Poland	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Italy	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Oct 11: Poland v Portugal.
Oct 14: Poland v Italy.
Nov 17: Italy v Portugal.
Nov 20: Portugal v Poland.

Group A4

Sep 8 - London
England 1 (Rashford 11)
Spain 2 (Saul 13, Rodrigo 32)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 81,392. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)
England: Pickford - Gomez, Stones, Maguire, Henderson (Dier 64), Trippier, Lingard, Alli, Shaw (Rose 53), Rashford (Welbeck 90+4), Kane.
Spain: De Gea - Carvajal, Nacho, Sergio Ramos, Marcos Alonso (Inigo Martinez 87), Thiago (Sergi Roberto 80), Busquets, Saul, Rodrigo, Iago Aspas (Marco Asensio 68), Isco.

Sep11 - Elche
Spain 6 (Saul 24, Marco Asensio 33, Kalinic og 35, Rodrigo 49, Sergio Ramos 57, Isco 70)
Croatia 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 26,900. **Ref:** Bastien (Fra)
Spain: De Gea - Carvajal (Azpilicueta 75), Nacho, Sergio Ramos, Gaya, Saul (Thiago 65), Busquets (Rodri 59), Dani Ceballos, Marco Asensio, Rodrigo, Isco.
Croatia: Kalinic - Vrsaljko (Rog 20), Mitrovic, Vida, Pivaric, Brozovic (Pjaca 62), Rakitic, Kovacic, Modric, Perisic, Santini (Livaja 71).

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
England	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Croatia	1	0	0	1	0	6	0

Oct 12: Croatia v England.
Oct 15: Spain v England.
Nov 15: Croatia v Spain.
Nov 18: England v Croatia.

● *The 4 group winners qualify for the Nations League finals*
● *The country placed bottom in each group will be relegated to League B for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The 4 countries with the best record in the League A group stage that have not already qualified for the 2020 European Championship finals (the qualifiers for which begin in March 2019) will go into play-offs, to be played in March 2020, to try to win the one place on offer via the League A play-offs route at the Euro 2020 finals*

League B

Group B1

Sep 6 - Uherske Hradiste
Czech Republic 1 (Schick 4)
Ukraine 2 (Konoplyanka 45+1, Zinchenko 90+3)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 7,974. **Ref:** Taylor (Eng)
Czech Republic: Vaclik - Kaderabek, Gebre Selassie, Kalas, Brabec, Boril, Husbauer, Soucek, Sykora (Horava 90+2), Schick (Tecl 83), Krmencik (Zmrhal 46).
Ukraine: Pyatov - Karavaev, Kryvtsov, Rakitskyi, Matviyenko, Yarmolenko (Zinchenko 66), Malinovskyi, Stepanenko, Konoplyanka (Tsygankov 77), Marlos, Yaremchuk (Seleznyov 85).

Sep 9 - Lviv
Ukraine 1 (Yarmolenko pen 80)
Slovakia 0
HT: 0-0. *Played behind closed doors.*
Ref: Sidiropoulos (Gre)
Ukraine: Pyatov - Karavaev, Burda, Rakitskyi, Matviyenko, Stepanenko (Sydorchuk 86), Yarmolenko, Marlos, Malinovskyi (Zinchenko 71), Konoplyanka (Tsygankov 78), Yaremchuk.
Slovakia: Dubravka - Satka, Skrtel, Skriniar, Hubocan, Kucka (Gregus 78), Lobotka, Mak, Hamsik, Weiss (Rusnak 70), Nemec (Duda 65).

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ukraine	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Czech Rep	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Slovakia	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Oct 13: Slovakia v Czech Republic.
Oct 16: Ukraine v Czech Republic.
Nov 16: Slovakia v Ukraine.
Nov 19: Czech Republic v Slovakia.

Group B2

Sep 7 - Trabzon
Turkey 1 (Serdar Aziz 41)
Russia 2 (Cheryshev 13, Dzyuba 49)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 29,702. **Ref:** Soares Dias (Por)
Turkey: Serkan - Sener, Serdar Aziz (Ayhan 46), Caglar, Kaldirim, Mehmet Topal (Malli 71), Okay, Cengiz, Yusuf (Ozyakup 57), Calhanoglu, Tosun.
Russia: Lunev - Fernandes, Neustadter, Dzhikiya, Kudryashov (Rausch 82), Zobnin, Gazinsky, Erokhin, Kuzyaev (Mogilevets 73), Cheryshev (Ionov 79), Dzyuba.

Sep10 - Stockholm
Sweden 2 (Kiese Thelin 35, Claesson 49)
Turkey 3 (Calhanoglu 51, Akbaba 88, 90+2)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 21,832. **Ref:** Gil Manzano (Spa)
Sweden: Olsen - Lustig (Krafth 79), Lindelof, Jansson, Augustinsson, Durmaz (Rohden 71), Sebastian Larsson, Ekdal (Hiljemark 56), Claesson, Kiese Thelin, Berg.
Turkey: Bolat - Mehmet Celik, Ayhan, Caglar, Bayram, Mehmet Topal (Akbaba 62), Okay, Cengiz (Gurler 77), Ozyakup, Calhanoglu (Malli 86), Tosun.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Russia	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Turkey	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Sweden	1	0	0	1	2	3	0

Oct 11: Russia v Sweden.
Oct 14: Russia v Turkey.
Nov 17: Turkey v Sweden.
Nov 20: Sweden v Russia.

Group B3

Sep 8 - Belfast
Northern Ireland 1 (Grigg 90+3)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Duljevic 36, Saric 64)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 16,942. **Ref:** Kralovec (CzR)
Northern Ireland: Peacock-Farrell - McLaughlin (Boyce 69), Cathcart, J Evans, Lewis, Davis, Norwood, Saville, McGinn (Ward 76), Lafferty (Grigg 69), Dallas.
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Sehic - Besic, Sunjic, Zukanovic, Civic (Zakaric 76), Saric (Krunic 67), Cimirot, Pjanic (Bajic 83), Visca, Dzeko, Duljevic.

Sep11 - Zenica
Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 (Dzeko 78)
Austria 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 9,100. **Ref:** Buquet (Fra)
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Sehic - Todorovic, Sunjic, Zukanovic, Civic, Besic, Pjanic (Krunic 89), Saric, Visca (Zakaric 87), Dzeko, Duljevic (Bajic 90+3).
Austria: Lindner - Ilsanker (Schaub 86), Prodl, Hinteregger, Lainer, Lazaro, Grillitsch (Burgstaller 81), Zulj, Alaba, Gregoritsch (Sabitzer 72), Arnautovic.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bosnia-Herz	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Nthn Ireland	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Austria	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Oct 12: Austria v Northern Ireland.
Oct 15: Bosnia-Herzegovina v Northern Ireland.
Nov 15: Austria v Bosnia-Herzegovina.
Nov 18: Northern Ireland v Austria.

Group B4

Sep 6 - Cardiff
Wales 4 (Lawrence 6, Bale 18, Ramsey 37, C Roberts 55)
Republic of Ireland 1 (Williams 66)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 25,657. **Ref:** Turpin (Fra)
Wales: Hennessey - C Roberts, Williams, Mepham, B Davies (Dummett 81), Allen, Ampadu (Smith 67), Brooks, Ramsey, Lawrence, Bale (T Roberts 75).
Republic of Ireland: Randolph - Coleman, Duffy, Clark, Ward (Stevens 61), Christie, Hendrick, Hourihane (Williams 56), O'Dowda, Walters, Robinson (Horgan 77).

Sep 9 - Aarhus
Denmark 2 (Eriksen 32, pen 63)
Wales 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 17,506. **Ref:** Aytekin (Ger)
Denmark: Schmeichel - Dalsgaard, Kjaer, M Jorgensen, J Larsen, Schone, Delaney, Poulsen (Cornelius 86), Eriksen, Sisto (Fischer 46), Braithwaite.
Wales: Hennessey - Gunter, Chester, Mepham, B Davies, Allen, Ampadu (T Roberts 71), C Roberts (Brooks 59), Ramsey, Lawrence (Woodburn 79), Bale.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Denmark	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Wales	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Rep of Ireland	1	0	0	1	1	4	0

Oct 13: Republic of Ireland v Denmark.
Oct 16: Republic of Ireland v Wales.
Nov 16: Wales v Denmark.
Nov 19: Denmark v Republic of Ireland.

● *The 4 group winners will be promoted to League A for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The country placed bottom in each group will be relegated to League C for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The 4 countries with the best record in the League B group stage that have not already qualified for the 2020 European Championship finals (the qualifiers for which begin in March 2019) will go into play-offs, to be played in March 2020, to try to win the one place on offer via the League B play-offs route at the Euro 2020 finals*

League C

Group C1

Sep 7 - Elbasan
Albania 1 (Xhaka 55)
Israel 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,126. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Albania: Strakosha - Hysaj, Veseli (Mavraj 84), Gjimshiti, Binaku, Xhaka, Basha, Gavazaj (Prenga 71), Memushaj, Hyka, Guri (Balaj 46).
Israel: Haimov - Dasa, Kapiloto (Micha 79), Yeini, Habashi, Tawatha, Kayal (Solomon 71), Natcho, Peretz, Zahavi (Hemed 47), Dabbur.

Sep10 - Glasgow
Scotland 2 (Gjimshiti og 47, Naismith 68)
Albania 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,455. **Ref:** Jug (Slk)
Scotland: A McGregor - Souttar, Mulgrew, Tierney, O'Donnell, McGinn, McDonald (Armstrong 46), C McGregor (McTominay 79), Robertson, Russell (Griffiths 70), Naismith.
Albania: Strakosha - Hysaj, Veseli (Mihaj 90+1), Gjimshiti, Binaku, Xhaka, Lilaj, Ndoj (Manaj 66), Gavazaj (Prenga 46), Balaj, Memushaj.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Scotland	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Albania	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Israel	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Oct 11: Israel v Scotland.
Oct 14: Israel v Albania.
Nov 17: Albania v Scotland.
Nov 20: Scotland v Israel.

Group C2

Sep 8 - Tallinn
Estonia 0
Greece 1 (Fortounis 14)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,567. **Ref:** Gozubuyuk (Hol)
Estonia: Aksalu - Kams, Baranov, Vihmann, Mets, Pikk, Ojamaa (Tamm 80), Dmitrijev, Vassiljev, Luts (Puri 86), Anier (Zenjov 63).
Greece: Barkas - Torosidis, Manolas, Papastathopoulos, Lykogiannis, Kourbelis, Bouchalakis (Tziolis 78), Mantalos, Fortounis, Pelkas (Koulouris 90+2), Mitroglou (Bakasetas 50).

Sep 8 - Tampere
Finland 1 (Pukki 7)
Hungary 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,220. **Ref:** Mazeika (Lit)
Finland: Hradecky - Raitala, Arajuuri, Toivio, Uronen (Granlund 45+1), Lod, Schuller (Sparv 63), Kauko, Soiri (Taylor 85), Tuominen, Pukki.
Hungary: Gulacsi - Lovrencsics, Lang, Kadar, Fiola, Patkai, Stieber (Varga 54), Kleinheisler, Kovacs (Kalmar 61), Sallai (Eppel 72), Szalai.

Sep11 - Turku
Finland 1 (Pukki 12)
Estonia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,632. **Ref:** Grinfeld (Isr)
Finland: Hradecky - Granlund (Vaisanen 76), Toivio, Arajuuri, Raitala, Lod (Karjalainen 87), Sparv, Schuller, Soiri, Tuominen, Pukki (Kauko 90+1).
Estonia: Aksalu - Teniste, Tamm, Mets, Klavan, Kallaste, Ojamaa, Vassiljev, Dmitrijev (Antonov 77), Luts (Anier 77), Zenjov (Purje 86).

Sep11 - Budapest
Hungary 2 (Sallai 15, Kleinheisler 42)
Greece 1 (Manolas 18)
HT: 2-1. *Played behind closed doors.*
Ref: Kulbakov (Bls)
Hungary: Gulacsi - Bese, Lang, Kadar, Fiola, Kleinheisler, A Nagy, Kovacs (Patkai 81), Varga (Lovrencsics 62), Szalai (Eppel 69), Sallai.
Greece: Barkas - Torosidis, Manolas (Oikonomou 52), Papastathopoulos, Tzavellas (Lykogiannis 46), Kourbelis, Bouchalakis, Christodoulopoulos, Fortounis, Pelkas, Donis (Mitroglou 46).

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Finland	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Hungary	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Greece	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Estonia	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

Oct 12: Estonia v Finland; Greece v Hungary.
Oct 15: Estonia v Hungary; Finland v Greece.
Nov 15: Greece v Finland; Hungary v Estonia.
Nov 18: Greece v Estonia; Hungary v Finland.

Group C3

Sep 6 - Oslo
Norway 2 (Johansen 21, 42)
Cyprus 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 6,572. **Ref:** Kovacs (Rom)
Norway: Jarstein - Elabdellaoui, Nordtveit, Ajer, Meling, Johansen (Fossum 72), Henriksen, Berge (Selnaes 69), M Elyounoussi, King (T Elyounoussi 90), Johnsen.
Cyprus: Pardo - Demetriou, Kousoulos, Merkis, Laifis, Vasiliou (Efrem 46), Papoulis, Kyriakou (Kastanos 77), Artymatas, Margaca (Ioannou 82), Sotiriou.

Sep 6 - Ljubljana
Slovenia 1 (Zajc 40)
Bulgaria 2 (Kraev 3, 59)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,100. **Ref:** Massa (Ita)
Slovenia: Belec - Skubic, Struna, Mevlja, Jokic, Kampl (Dervisevic 83), Krhin (Bezjak 66), Kurtic, Zajc, Sporar (Matavz 73), Verbic.
Bulgaria: Iliev - Bandalovski, Chorbadzhiyski, Bodurov, Bozhikov (Lyaskov 46), Slavchev, Kostadinov, Nedelev (Goranov 82), Kraev (Raynov 72), Despodov, I Popov.

Sep 9 - Sofia
Bulgaria 1 (Vasilev 58)
Norway 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,100. **Ref:** Stefanski (Pol)
Bulgaria: Iliev - S Popov, Chorbadzhiyski, Bodurov, Bandalovski, Ivanov, Kostadinov, Raynov (Vasilev 50), Despodov (Goranov 73), I Popov, Kraev (Malinov 82).
Norway: Jarstein - Elabdellaoui, Nordtveit, Ajer, Meling, Johansen (Fossum 62), Henriksen, Berge (Selnaes 78), M Elyounoussi, King, Johnsen (Sorloth 46). *Sent off: Nordtveit 88.*

Sep 9 - Nicosia
Cyprus 2 (Sotiriou 69, Stojanovic og 89)
Slovenia 1 (Beric 54)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,115. **Ref:** Treimanis (Lat)
Cyprus: Panayi - Demetriou, Kousoulos, Laifis, Ioannou (Margaca 67), Kyriakou, Artymatas, Papoulis, Kastanos (Roushias 60), Efrem (Merkis 90+2), Sotiriou.
Slovenia: Belec - Stojanovic, Blazic, Mevlja, Jokic, Crnigoj, Dervisevic, Kurtic (Stulac 77), Verbic (Bezjak 46), Zajc, Beric (Sporar 83).

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bulgaria	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Norway	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Cyprus	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Slovenia	2	0	0	2	2	4	0

Oct 13: Bulgaria v Cyprus; Norway v Slovenia.
Oct 16: Norway v Bulgaria; Slovenia v Cyprus.
Nov 16: Cyprus v Bulgaria; Slovenia v Norway.
Nov 19: Bulgaria v Slovenia; Cyprus v Norway.

Group C4

Sep 7 - Vilnius
Lithuania 0
Serbia 1 (Tadic pen 38)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 4,378. **Ref:** Madden (Sco)
Lithuania: Setkus - Baravykas, Zulpa, Jankauskas, Klimavicius, Vaitkunas, Slivka, Verbickas (Sernas 72), Kuklys (Vorobjovas 46), Novikovas, Cernych.
Serbia: Dmitrovic - Rukavina, Veljkovic, Milenkovic, Rodic (Kolarov 77), Maksimovic, Matic (Lukic 82), Zivkovic, Tadic, Kostic (Radonjic 90), Mitrovic.

Sep 7 - Ploiesti
Romania 0
Montenegro 0
Played behind closed doors. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)
Romania: Tatarusanu - Benzar, Chiriches (Balasa 31), Sapunaru, Bancu, Pintilii (Anton 73), Stanciu, Chipciu, Maxim, Mitrita (Budescu 67), Keseru.
Montenegro: Petkovic - Stojkovic, Savic, Simic, Tomasevic, Scekic (Kosovic 74), Vukcevic, Boljevic (Beciraj 80), Ivanic, Jovovic, Mugosa. *Sent off: Mugosa 77.*

Sep10 - Podgorica
Montenegro 2 (Savic pen 34, Jankovic 35)
Lithuania 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 5,239. **Ref:** Kehlet (Den)
Montenegro: Petkovic - Stojkovic, Savic (Kopitovic 80), Simic, Tomasevic, Kosovic, Vukcevic (Scekic 72), Jankovic (Boljevic 87), Ivanic, Jovovic, Beciraj.
Lithuania: Setkus - Lasickas (Sernas 62), Leimonas (Borovskij 46), Klimavicius, Vaitkunas, Verbickas (Kuklys 46), Zulpa, Slivka, Vorobjovas, Novikovas, Cernych.

Sep10 - Belgrade
Serbia 2 (Mitrovic 26, 63)
Romania 2 (Stanciu pen 48, Tucudean 68)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,496. **Ref:** Bezborodov (Rus)
Serbia: Dmitrovic - Rukavina, Spajic, Veljkovic, Kolarov, Maksimovic, Lukic (Matic 71), Tadic, Milinkovic-Savic (Kostic 63), Ljajic (Prijovic 77), Mitrovic.
Romania: Tatarusanu - Manea, Balasa, Sapunaru, Bancu, Chipciu (Rotariu 90+4), Anton, Marin, Stanciu, Tucudean (Keseru 82), Dragus (Mitrita 60).

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Montenegro	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Serbia	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Romania	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Lithuania	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Oct 11: Lithuania v Romania; Montenegro v Serbia.
Oct 14: Lithuania v Montenegro; Romania v Serbia.
Nov 17: Romania v Lithuania; Serbia v Montenegro.
Nov 20: Montenegro v Romania; Serbia v Lithuania.

● *The 4 group winners will be promoted to League B for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The country placed bottom in groups C2, C3 & C4, plus the lowest-ranked 3rd-placed team from groups C1, C2, C3 & C4 (based on their group-stage performance) will be relegated to League D for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The 4 countries with the best record in the League C group stage that have not already qualified for the 2020 European Championship finals (the qualifiers for which begin in March 2019) will go into play-offs, to be played in March 2020, to try to win the one place on offer via the League C play-offs route at the Euro 2020 finals*

League D

Group D1

Sep 6 - Astana
Kazakhstan 0
Georgia 2 (Chakvetadze 69, Maliy og 74)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 28,736. **Ref:** Meler (Tur)

Sep 6 - Riga
Latvia 0
Andorra 0
Att: 4,803. **Ref:** Kennedy (NI)

Sep 9 - Tbilisi
Georgia 1 (Okriashvili pen 77)
Latvia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 45,716. **Ref:** Papapetrou (Gre)

Sep10 - Andorra la Vella
Andorra 1 (Alaez 86)
Kazakhstan 1 (Logvinenko 68)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,235. **Ref:** Thorarinsson (Ice)
Sent off: Muzhikov (Kazakhstan) 76

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Georgia	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Andorra	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Latvia	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Kazakhstan	2	0	1	1	1	3	1

Oct 13: Georgia v Andorra; Latvia v Kazakhstan.
Oct 16: Kazakhstan v Andorra; Latvia v Georgia.
Nov 15: Andorra v Georgia; Kazakhstan v Latvia.
Nov 19: Andorra v Latvia; Georgia v Kazakhstan.

Group D2

Sep 8 - Minsk
Belarus 5 (Stasevich 4, Dragun 26, 87, Saroka pen 67, Kovalev 90+1)
San Marino 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 13,634. **Ref:** Scharer (Swi)

Sep 8 - Luxembourg
Luxembourg 4 (Malget 34, O Thill 60, Sinani 75, Martins 83)
Moldova 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,956. **Ref:** Harvey (RoI)

Sep11 - Chisinau
Moldova 0
Belarus 0
Att: 4,942. **Ref:** Zebec (Cro)

Sep11 - Serravalle
San Marino 0
Luxembourg 3 (Chanot 9, Joachim 45+1, Sinani 52)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 794. **Ref:** Glova (Slk)

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Luxembourg	2	2	0	0	7	0	6
Belarus	2	1	1	0	5	0	4
Moldova	2	0	1	1	0	4	1
San Marino	2	0	0	2	0	8	0

Oct 12: Belarus v Lux'bourg; Moldova v S Marino.
Oct 15: Belarus v Moldova; Lux'bourg v S Marino.
Nov 15: Lux'bourg v Belarus; S Marino v Moldova.
Nov 18: Moldova v Lux'bourg; S Marino v Belarus.

Group D3

Sep 7 - Baku
Azerbaijan 0
Kosovo 0
Att: 19,500. **Ref:** Nilsen (Nor)

Sep 7 - Torshavn
Faroe Islands 3 (Edmundsson 31, R Joensen 38, Hansson 52)
Malta 1 (Mifsud 42)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 3,234. **Ref:** Nevalainen (Fin)

Sep10 - Pristina
Kosovo 2 (Zeneli 50, Nuhiu 55)
Faroe Islands 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,677. **Ref:** Vertenten (Blg)

Sep10 - Valletta
Malta 1 (Agius pen 10)
Azerbaijan 1 (Khalilzade 26)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,500. **Ref:** Dabanovic (Mne)

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kosovo	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Faroe Islands	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Azerbaijan	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Malta	2	0	1	1	2	4	1

Oct 11: Faroe Is v Azerbaijan; Kosovo v Malta.
Oct 14: Azerbaijan v Malta; Faroe Is v Kosovo.
Nov 17: Azerbaijan v Faroe Is; Malta v Kosovo.
Nov 20: Kosovo v Azerbaijan; Malta v Faroe Is.

Group D4

Sep 6 - Yerevan
Armenia 2 (Pizzelli 30, Barseghyan 76)
Liechtenstein 1 (S Wolfinger 33)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,132. **Ref:** Jorgji (Alb)
Sent off: Polverino (Liechtenstein) 74

Sep 6 - Gibraltar
Gibraltar 0
Macedonia 2 (Trickovski 19, Alioski 35)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 1,850. **Ref:** Maae (Den)

Sep 9 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 2 (Salanovic 32, Wieser 72)
Gibraltar 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,110. **Ref:** Sant (Mlt)

Sep 9 - Skopje
Macedonia 2 (Alioski pen 14, Pandev 59)
Armenia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,730. **Ref:** Schuttengruber (Aut)

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Macedonia	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Armenia	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Liechtenstein	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Gibraltar	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

Oct 13: Armenia v Gibraltar; Maced'ia v Liech'stein.
Oct 16: Armenia v Maced'ia; Gibraltar v Liech'stein.
Nov 16: Gibraltar v Armenia; Liech'stein v Maced'ia.
Nov 19: Liech'stein v Armenia; Maced'ia v Gibraltar.

● *The 4 group winners will be promoted to League C for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The 4 countries with the best record in the League D group stage that have not already qualified for the 2020 European Championship finals (the qualifiers for which begin in March 2019) will go into play-offs, to be played in March 2020, to try to win the one place on offer via the League D play-offs route at the Euro 2020 finals*

2019 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS

There will be 6 matchdays in total

Group A

Sep 8 - Bata
Equatorial Guinea 1 (Nsue 31)
Sudan 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Martins de Carvalho (Ang)

Sep 9 - Antananarivo
Madagascar 2 (Voavy 44, Koulibaly og 68)
Senegal 2 (Konate 27, Balde 62)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Bondo (Bot)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Senegal	2	1	1	0	5	2	4
Madagascar	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
Equat Guinea	2	1	0	1	1	3	3
Sudan	2	0	0	2	1	4	0

Group B

Sep 8 - Mitsamiouli
Comoros 1 (Ben Nabouhane 15)
Cameroon 1 (Bahoken 80)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Grisha (Egy)

Sep 8 - Casablanca
Morocco 3 (Ziyech 3, En-Nesyri 42, 78)
Malawi 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Ngambo (DRC)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon (QF)	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Morocco	2	1	0	1	3	1	3
Malawi	2	1	0	1	1	3	3
Comoros	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Group C

Sep 8 - Libreville
Gabon 1 (Aubameyang 76)
Burundi 1 (Berahino 39)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Camille (Sey)

Sep 9 - Juba
South Sudan 0
Mali 3 (Marega 45, S Coulibaly 72, A Traore 86)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Jiyed (Mor)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mali	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Burundi	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Gabon	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
South Sudan	2	0	0	2	0	6	0

Group D

Sep 8 - Bakau
Gambia 1 (Ceesay 49)
Algeria 1 (Bounedjah 47)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Essrayri (Tun)

Sep 9 - Lome
Togo 0
Benin 0
Ref: El Jaafari (Mor)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Benin	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Gambia	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Togo	2	0	1	1	0	1	1

Group E

Sep 8 - Victoria
Seychelles 0
Nigeria 3 (Musa 15, Awaziem 34, Ighalo pen 58)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Omweno (Ken)

Sep 8 - Durban
South Africa 0
Libya 0
Ref: Alioum (Cam)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libya	2	1	1	0	5	1	4
South Africa	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Nigeria	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Seychelles	2	0	0	2	1	8	0

Group F

Sep 8 - Nairobi
Kenya 1 (Opoku og 41)
Ghana 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Sikazwe (Zam)
Sent off: Onyango (Kenya) 60

Sep 9 - Hawassa
Ethiopia 1 (Kebede pen 36)
Sierra Leone 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Selmi (Tun)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana	2	1	0	1	5	1	3
Kenya	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Sierra Leone	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Ethiopia	2	1	0	1	1	5	3

Group G

Sep 9 - Brazzaville
Congo 1 (Bifouma 50)
Zimbabwe 1 (Billiat 22)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Gomes (SAf)

Sep 9 - Monrovia
Liberia 1 (Jebor 62)
DR Congo 1 (Elia 83)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Traore (Mli)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zimbabwe	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
DR Congo	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Congo	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Liberia	2	0	1	1	1	4	1

Group H

Sep 9 - Conakry
Guinea 1 (Soumah 71)
Central African Republic 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ghorbal (Alg)

Sep 9 - Kigali
Rwanda 1 (Kagere 65)
Ivory Coast 2 (Kodjia 45, Gradel 49)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Pavaza (Nam)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guinea	2	2	0	0	4	2	6
Ivory Coast	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Cent Af Rep	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Rwanda	2	0	0	2	2	4	0

Group I

Sep 8 - Nouakchott
Mauritania 2 (Diakite 37, Camara 40)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Hakizimana (Rwa)

Sep 9 - Luanda
Angola 1 (Gelson 30)
Botswana 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Gassama (Gam)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mauritania	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Burkina Faso	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Angola	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Botswana	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

Group J

Sep 8 - Borg El Arab
Egypt 6 (M Mohsen 13, Ashraf 20, Salah 29, 86, S Mohsen 73, Elneny 90+2)
Niger 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** N'Diaye (Sen)

Sep 9 - Manzini
Swaziland 0
Tunisia 2 (Khenissi 18, Sliti 37)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Tessema (Eth)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP J

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Egypt	2	1	0	1	6	1	3
Swaziland	2	0	1	1	0	2	1
Niger	2	0	1	1	0	6	1

Group K

Sep 8 - Maputo
Mozambique 2 (Zainadine Junior 43, Reginaldo 90+1)
Guinea-Bissau 2 (Embalo 51, Mendy 90+6)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Heeralall (Mrs)

Sep 8 - Windhoek
Namibia 1 (Shilongo 79)
Zambia 1 (Shonga 90+2)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Zio (BuF)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP K

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guinea-Bissau	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Mozambique	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Zambia	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Namibia	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Group L

Sep 8 - Kampala
Uganda 0
Tanzania 0
Ref: Otogo-Castane (Gab)

Sep 9 - Maseru
Lesotho 1 (Motebang 77)
Cape Verde Islands 1 (Djaniny 82)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Abid Charef (Alg)
Sent off: Helder Tavares (Cape Verde) 85

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP L

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uganda	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Lesotho	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Tanzania	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Cape Verde Is	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

● *The top 2 in each group will qualify for the 24-team finals. Finals hosts Cameroon qualify automatically regardless of the fact that they are taking part in the qualifying tournament*

CONCACAF NATIONS LEAGUE QUALS

1st matchday

Sep 6 - Les Abymes, Guadeloupe
Dominica 0
Surinam 0
Ref: Bassue (SKN)
Sent off: Williams (Dominica) 61

Sep 6 - Leonora
Guyana 2 (Bobb 46, Danns 78)
Barbados 2 (Hope 65, 73)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Anderson (PR)

Sep 7 - The Valley
Anguilla 0
French Guiana 5 (Lauristin 15, J Torvic 29, Eric pen 38, Issorat 55, Rino 83)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Tyrell (Jam)

Sep 7 - North Sound
Antigua & Barbuda 0
St Lucia 3 (Williams 50, Remy 67, McFarlane 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Johnson (Guy)

Sep 7 - Belmopan
Belize 4 (McCaulay 40, Miller og 44, Lopez 80, 90+4)
Bahamas 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Brea (Cub)

Sep 8 - Havana
Cuba 11 (Paradela 7, 36, 49, Morris 32, 83, Baquero 35, 45, Santa Cruz 52, 54, Caballero 65, 77)
Turks & Caicos Islands 0
HT: 5-0. **Ref:** Morrison (Jam)

Sep 8 - Look Out
Montserrat 1 (Taylor 38)
El Salvador 2 (Ceren 62, 90+4)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Moore (Guy)

Sep 8 - Arnos Vale
St Vincent & The Grenadines 0
Nicaragua 2 (Nino 27, Barrera 39)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Radix (Grn)

Sep 9 - Willemstad, Curacao
Aruba 3 (Gomez 7, Baten pen 11, Santos de Gouveia 50)
Bermuda 1 (Smith 21)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Reyna (Gtm)

Sep 9 - Willemstad, Curacao
Bonaire 0
Dominican Republic 5 (Peralta 66, 75, 88, Lopez 86, Heredia 90+1)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Senecharles (Hai)

Sep 9 - Kingston
Jamaica 4 (Mattocks 2, 58, Burke 35, 66)
Cayman Islands 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Lopez (Gtm)

Sep 9 - Basseterre
St Kitts & Nevis 1 (Panayiotou 90+1)
Puerto Rico 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Dolaini (Sur)

Sep 9 - Bradenton, USA
US Virgin Islands 0
Canada 8 (Osorio 6, Cavallini 9, 45, David 32, 37, Hoilett 50, Larin 60, 80)
HT: 0-5. **Ref:** Gaymes (SVG)

Sep10 - Willemstad
Curacao 10 (Hooi 11, C Martina 19, Kuwas 23, Bacuna 53, 68, Janga 59, 84, 88, Nepomuceno 63, Leuteria 90+1)
Grenada 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Cruz (CR)

Sep10 - Port-au-Prince
Haiti 13 (Pierrot 11, 72, Nazon 19, 35, 42, 61, 64, Forsythe og 26, Herold 47, Arcus 59, Etienne 71, Mustivar 86, Louis 88)
Sint Maarten 0
HT: 5-0. **Ref:** Sandoval (Nic)

Sep11 - The Valley, Anguilla
Saint-Martin 0
Guadeloupe 3 (David 7, Gendrey 27, Passape 65)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** De Leca (Aru)

Postponed: *Martinique v British Virgin Islands*

CONCACAF NATIONS LEAGUE QUALIFIERS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Haiti	1	1	0	0	13	0	3
Cuba	1	1	0	0	11	0	3
Curacao	1	1	0	0	10	0	3
Canada	1	1	0	0	8	0	3
Dominican Rep	1	1	0	0	5	0	3
French Guiana	1	1	0	0	5	0	3
Belize	1	1	0	0	4	0	3
Jamaica	1	1	0	0	4	0	3
Guadeloupe	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
St Lucia	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Aruba	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Nicaragua	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
El Salvador	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
St Kitts & Nevis	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Barbados	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Guyana	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Surinam	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Dominica	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
British Virgin Is	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Martinique	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montserrat	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Puerto Rico	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Bermuda	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
St Vincent & G	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Antigua & B'da	1	0	0	1	0	3	0
Saint-Martin	1	0	0	1	0	3	0
Bahamas	1	0	0	1	0	4	0
Cayman Is	1	0	0	1	0	4	0
Anguilla	1	0	0	1	0	5	0
Bonaire	1	0	0	1	0	5	0
US Virgin Is	1	0	0	1	0	8	0
Grenada	1	0	0	1	0	10	0
Turks & Caicos	1	0	0	1	0	11	0
Sint Maarten	1	0	0	1	0	13	0

● *Each country will play 4 games in the qualifying stage (2 home, 2 away), the results being used to compile a league table of all 34 competing countries*
● *The top 6 in the final table will qualify to participate in League A of the 2019-20 CONCACAF Nations League competition, alongside the 6 countries that participated in the final round of CONCACAF'S 2018 World Cup qualifiers (Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago and United States), who qualified automatically for League A of the Nations League competition*
● *The next16 in the final table will qualify to participate in League B of the 2019-20 CONCACAF Nations League competition*
● *The bottom12 in the final table will qualify to participate in League C of the 2019-20 CONCACAF Nations League competition*
● *In addition, the top10 in the final table will qualify for the 2019 CONCACAF Gold Cup, joining direct entrants Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago and United States*

SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP

(South Asian Football Federation)

Played in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Group A

Sep 4
Nepal 1 (Magar 82)
Pakistan 2 (Bashir pen 36, Muhammad Ali 90+6)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Arafah (Jor)

Bangladesh 2 (Barman pen 3, Mahbubur Rahman 47)
Bhutan 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Pu-Udom (Tha)

Sep 6
Nepal 4 (A Tamang 21, Bal 71, Khawas 79, Khadka 88)
Bhutan 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Rowan (Ind)
Sent off: Wangdi (Bhutan) 69

Bangladesh 1 (Barman 85)
Pakistan 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Akrami (Irn)

Sep 8
Pakistan 3 (Riaz 20, Bashir 29, F Ahmed 90+1)
Bhutan 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Akrami (Irn)

Bangladesh 0
Nepal 2 (Magar 33, N Shrestha 90)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Perera (Sri)

SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP – GROUP A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nepal (Q)	3	2	0	1	7	2	6
Pakistan (Q)	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
Bangladesh	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
Bhutan	3	0	0	3	0	9	0

Group B

Sep 5
India 2 (Kuruniyan 35, Chhangte 47)
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Hattab (Syr)

Sep 7
Maldives 0
Sri Lanka 0
Ref: Arafah (Jor)

Sep 9
India 2 (Poojari 36, M Singh 44)
Maldives 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Hattab (Syr)

SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP – GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
India (Q)	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Maldives (Q)[1]	2	0	1	1	0	2	1
Sri Lanka[1]	2	0	1	1	0	2	1

[1]*Position order decided by toss of coin*

● *The top 2 in both groups qualified for the semi-finals*

Semi-finals

Sep12
Nepal 0
Maldives 3 (Ghanee 8, I W Hassan 84, 86)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Perera (Sri)

India 3 (M Singh 48, 69, Passi 84)
Pakistan 1 (Muhammad Ali 88)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Pu-Udom (Tha)
Sent off: Chhangte (India) 86; Mohsin Ali (Pakistan) 86

Final

Sep15
Maldives 2 (I M Hussain 19, Fasir 66)
India 1 (Passi 90+2)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Akrami (Irn)

EAFF CHAMPIONSHIP (East Asian Cup)

(East Asian Football Federation)

1st round

Played in Ulan Bator, Mongolia

Sep 2
Guam 4 (Mendiola 13, Lopez 26, 68, Cunliffe 65)
Northern Mariana Islands 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 105. **Ref:** Gu (Chn)

Mongolia 4 (Seo-Od-Yanjiv 40, Janchiv 45, Batbold 74, Nyam-Osor 83)
Macau 1 (Gois Fernandes 48)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 1,654. **Ref:** Kim (SKo)
Sent off: Lam Ka Pou (Macau) 90+3

Sep 4
Macau 2 (Lam Ka Seng 14, Leong Ka Hang 78)
Guam 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 106. **Ref:** Kao (Tai)

Mongolia 9 (Munkh-Erdene 11, 14, Seo-Od-Yanjiv 25, 55, Altansukh 39, Batbold 71, 78, Maratkhan 86, Orkhon 89)
Northern Mariana Islands 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 2,021. **Ref:** Luk (HK)

Sep 6
Northern Mariana Islands 1 (Tenorio 33)
Macau 1 (Leong Ka Hang 20)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 17. **Ref:** Luk (HK)

Mongolia 1 (Norjmoo 90+4)
Guam 1 (Mendiola 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,521. **Ref:** Kim (SKo)

EAFF CHAMPIONSHIP – 1ST ROUND – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mongolia (Q)	3	2	1	0	14	2	7
Macau	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Guam	3	1	1	1	5	3	4
N Mariana Is	3	0	1	2	1	14	1

● *Mongolia have qualified for the 2nd round, which Hong Kong, North Korea & Taiwan enter directly. The 2nd round winner will qualify for the final round, which China, Japan & South Korea enter directly*

AFF CHAMPIONSHIP (Suzuki Cup)

(ASEAN Football Federation)

Qualifying tie

1st leg

Sep1 - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
East Timor 3 (Henrique 28, 32, Silveiro 90+1)
Brunei 1 (Azwan 57)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Mashentsev (Kyr)

2nd leg

Sep 8 - Bandar Seri Begawan
Brunei 1 (Najib 75)
East Timor 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Bonyadifar (Irn)
East Timor 3-2 on agg

● *East Timor have qualified for the finals*

FRIENDLIES

Wednesday, August 22

Aug 22 - Philipsburg
Sint Maarten 1
Anguilla 1 (Rogers 30)
HT: 1-1

Sunday, August 26

Aug 26 - The Valley
Anguilla 1 (Battice)
Saint-Martin 2 (Arrondell x2)

Wednesday, August 29

Aug 29 - Nilphamari
Bangladesh 0
Sri Lanka 1 (Fazal 10)
HT: 0-1

Aug 29 - Bridgetown
Barbados 0
Cuba 2 (Morris 41, Baquero 43)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Ward (SKN)
Sent off: Chandler (Barbados) 60; Lopez (Cuba) 60

Aug 29 - Taipa
Macau 1 (Lam Ka Seng 77)
Solomon Islands 4 (Molea 40, Kaua 48, Hou 52, Totori 60)
HT: 0-1

Sunday, September 2

Sep 2 - Hawassa
Ethiopia 1 (Kebede 72)
Burundi 1 (Shabani 58)
HT: 0-0

Wednesday, September 5

Sep 5 - Suva
Fiji 1 (Krishna pen 65)
Solomon Islands 1 (Lea'alafa 23)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Waldron (NZ)

Sep 5 - Trnava
Slovakia 3 (Nemec 11, Rusnak 37, Fogt og 79)
Denmark 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 6,432. **Ref:** Weinberger (Aut)
Slovakia: Kozacik - Hubocan, Skrtel (Gyomber 82), Satka, Mazan, Hrosovsky, Rusnak (Mak 46), Kucka (Gregus 60), Hamsik (Duda 60), Weiss (Pacinda 67), Nemec (Duris 46).
Denmark: Haagh - Vollesen (Jakobsen 75), Johansen, D Nielsen, Bertelsen (Fonss 71), Bannis (Hunsballe 46), Johansson (Christensen 84), Hoybye (Fogt 60), Gaudin, Kempel (Holm 60), Offenberg.

Thursday, September 6

Sep 6 - Vienna
Austria 2 (Helander og 11, Alaba 64)
Sweden 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,100. **Ref:** Gil (Pol)
Austria: Lindner - Ilsanker, Prodl (Dragovic 46), Hinteregger, Lainer, Grillitsch (Schlager 81), Zulj, Alaba (Ulmer 65), Schopf (Lazaro 59), Arnautovic (Sabitzer 65), Burgstaller (Gregoritsch 59).
Sweden: Nordfeldt (Johnsson 46) - Krafth, Jansson, Helander, Hult, Sema (Claesson 67), Svensson (Sebastian Larsson 78), Hiljemark (Sam Larsson 62), Rohden, Kiese Thelin (Guidetti 46), Quaison.

Sep 6 - Riffa
Bahrain 1 (Adnan 90+2)
Philippines 1 (P Younghusband pen 49)
HT: 0-0

Sep 6 - Amsterdam
Holland 2 (Depay 60, 83)
Peru 1 (Aquino 13)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 40,127. **Ref:** Stieler (Ger)
Holland: Cillessen - Tete (Janmaat 72), De Ligt, Van Dijk, Blind, Wijnaldum (F De Jong 46), Strootman (Propper 46), Sneijder (Promes 62), Vormer (Kluivert 85), Depay, Babel (Vilhena 86).
Peru: Gallese - Advincula, Ramos, Santamaria (Abram 75), Trauco (Sandoval 59), Aquino (Pena 79), Yotun (Cartagena 89), Carrillo (Calcaterra 68), Cueva, Loyola, Farfan.

Sep 6 - Amman
Jordan 0
Lebanon 1 (Bugiel 77)
HT: 0-0

Sep 6 - Bishkek
Kyrgyzstan 1 (Murzaev 2)
Palestine 1 (Dabbagh 38)
HT: 1-1

Sep 6 - Faro-Loule
Portugal 1 (Pepe 32)
Croatia 1 (Perisic 18)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 26,355. **Ref:** Estrada Fernandez (Spa)
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Joao Cancelo, Pepe, Ruben Dias, Mario Rui, William Carvalho (Sergio Oliveira 82), Ruben Neves (Renato Sanches 86), Pizzi (Bruno Fernandes 61), Bernardo Silva (Gelson Martins 46), Andre Silva (Gedson Fernandes 89), Bruma (Rony Lopes 68).
Croatia: Kalinic - Vrsaljko (Milic 46), Mitrovic, Vida (Jedvaj 35), Barisic, Badelj, Kovacic, Pjaca (Rog 72), Modric (Pasalic 55), Perisic (Cop 63), Livaja (Santini 57).

Sep 6 - Palamos, Spain
Trinidad & Tobago 2 (Guerra 37, Lewis 58)
United Arab Emirates 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Miguel (Por)

Sep 6 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 1 (Bikmaev 64)
Syria 1 (Al Somah 78)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kurbanov (Tkm)

Friday, September 7

Sep 7 - Los Angeles, USA
Argentina 3 (Martinez pen 27, Lo Celso 35, Simeone 44)
Guatemala 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 22,446. **Ref:** Rodriguez (Hnd)
Argentina: Rulli - Tagliafico, Funes Mori (Kannemann 65), Pezzella (Franco 56), Saravia, Martinez (Vazquez 55), Paredes (Ascacibar 46), Lo Celso, Palacios (Cervi 65), Simeone, Pavon (Vargas 46).
Guatemala: Motta - Moreira, Morales, Vasquez (Gallardo 46), Yanes (Jimenez 46), Contreras (Macal 70), Norales (Ceballos 63), Vargas (Perez 46), De Leon, Saravia (Marquez 59), Martinez.

Sep 7 - Harrison, USA
Ecuador 2 (Valencia pen 17, Renato Ibarra 49)
Jamaica 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,200. **Ref:** Unkel (USA)
Ecuador: Dominguez - Paredes (Pineida 61), Erazo, Arboleda, Ramirez, Renato Ibarra, Orejuela, Vega (Gaibor 67), Preciado (Guerrero 61), Valencia (Romario Ibarra 67), Bolanos (Sornoza 61).
Jamaica: Knight (White 59) - Hector (Lowe 59), McCarthy, Shaw (Watson 67), Richie, Vassell, Thomas, Morris (Marshall 59), Gordon (Reid 67), Williams (East 59), Lambert.

Sep 7 - Houston, USA
Mexico 1 (Jimenez pen 24)
Uruguay 4 (Gimenez 21, Suarez 31, 40, Pereiro 58)
HT: 1-3. **Att:** 60,617. **Ref:** Elfath (USA)
Mexico: Ochoa - Rodriguez, Ayala, Angulo, Gallardo, J Dos Santos (J Gonzalez 46), Gutierrez (Guzman 59), E Hernandez (Lainez 65), Pulido (Alvarado 46), Lozano (Zaldivar 71), Jimenez.
Uruguay: Muslera - Caceres, Gimenez, Godin, Laxalt, Bentancur (Nandez 73), Torreira (Stuani 46), Vecino, Urretaviscaya (Valverde 82), Suarez (Lodeiro 67), Pereiro (Silva 82).

Sep 7 - Doha
Qatar 1 (Almoez Ali 25)
China 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,200. **Ref:** Shaban (Kuw)

Sep 7 - Glasgow
Scotland 0
Belgium 4 (R Lukaku 28, E Hazard 46, Batshuayi 51, 59)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,196. **Ref:** Banti (Ita)
Scotland: Gordon - Souttar, Mulgrew (O'Donnell 67), Tierney, Fraser, McGinn (Shinnie 73), McDonald (Snodgrass 52), Robertson, C McGregor (Russell 67), Armstrong (Jack 52), Griffiths (Naismith 46).
Belgium: Courtois - Boyata, Kompany (Vermaelen 46), Vertonghen, Castagne (Meunier 46), Tielemans, Dembele (Verstraete 84), T Hazard, Mertens (Carrasco 46), E Hazard (Vanaken 55), R Lukaku (Batshuayi 46).

Sep 7 - Singapore
Singapore 1 (Ikhsan 74)
Mauritius 1 (Justin 5)
HT: 0-1

Sep 7 - Goyang
South Korea 2 (Lee Jae-sung 35, Nam Tae-hee 78)
Costa Rica 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 36,127. **Ref:** Ma (Chn)
South Korea: Kim Seung-gyu - Lee Yong (Kim Moon-hwan 86), Jang Hyun-soo, Kim Young-gwon, Hong Chul, Ki Sung-yueng (Kim Min-jae 46), Jung Woo-young, Son Heung-min (Lee Seung-woo 83), Nam Tae-hee (Hwang In-beom 80), Lee Jae-sung (Moon Seon-min 68), Ji Dong-won (Hwang Ui-jo 67).
Costa Rica: Alvarado - Gamboa, Duarte, Calvo, Oviedo, Guzman (Azofeifa 81), Cruz, Marin (Moya 86), Aguilar (Leal 57), Colindres (Wallace 69), George (Ramirez 69).

Sep 7 - Taipei
Taiwan 2 (Wu Chun-ching 13, Dogan 53)
Malaysia 0
HT: 1-0

Sep 7 - East Rutherford
United States 0
Brazil 2 (Roberto Firmino 11, Neymar pen 43)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 32,489. **Ref:** Guerrero (Mex)
United States: Steffen - Yedlin, Miazga, Brooks, Robinson, Trapp (Roldan 83), Arriola (Acosta 55), Adams, McKennie (Delgado 83), Green (Weah 55), Wood (Zardes 70).
Brazil: Alisson - Fabinho, Marquinhos, Thiago Silva (Dede 80), Filipe Luis, Casemiro, Douglas Costa (Willian 61), Fred (Arthur 60), Philippe Coutinho (Lucas Paqueta 70), Neymar (Everton 80), Roberto Firmino (Richarlison 75).

Sep 7 - Miami, USA
Venezuela 1 (Machis 4)
Colombia 2 (Falcao 55, Chara 89)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 34,000. **Ref:** Bejarano (CR)
Venezuela: Farinez - Gonzalez, Chancellor (Osorio 87), Angel, Feltscher (Mago 62), Cordova (Gonzalez 59), Rincon, Moreno (Savarino 81), Machis (Otero 81), Rondon, Martinez (Lucena 67).
Colombia: Ospina - Arias (Palacios 89), D Sanchez, Tesillo, Borja, Cuadrado (Chara 74), Barrios (Campuzano 80), Uribe, Quintero (Villa 74), Bacca (Muriel 67), Falcao (Morelos 76).

Sunday, September 9

Sep 9 - Sinsheim
Germany 2 (Brandt 25, Schulz 85)
Peru 1 (Advincula 22)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 25,494. **Ref:** Schorgenhofer (Aut)
Germany: Ter Stegen - Ginter (Kehrer 72), Boateng (Rudiger 46), Sule, Schulz, Kimmich, Gundogan (Muller 84), Kroos, Brandt (Petersen 70), Werner (Havertz 88), Reus (Draxler 46).
Peru: Gallese - Advincula, Araujo, Santamaria, Trauco, Aquino, Farfan, Cueva, Yotun (Calcaterra 76), Flores (Lopez 67), Ruidiaz (Pena 86).

Sep 9 - Amman, Jordan
Lebanon 0
Oman 0

Monday, September 10

Sep10 - Riffa
Bahrain 0
China 0

Sep10 - Phnom Penh
Cambodia 1 (Visal 18)
Malaysia 3 (Shahrul 62, Syazwan Ishak 74, Shahrel 90+3)
HT: 1-0

Sep10 - Al Farwaniyah
Kuwait 2 (Mhawi og 51, Al Hajri 77)
Iraq 2 (Mohanad Ali 4, Faez 64)
HT: 0-1

Sep10 - Bishkek
Kyrgyzstan 2 (Zhyrgalbek 75, Sagynbaev 85)
Syria 1 (Al Somah pen 78)
HT: 0-0

Sep10 - Rostov-on-Don
Russia 5 (Ionov 8, pen 29, Zabolotniy 24, Erokhin 79, Poloz 83)
Czech Republic 1 (Soucek 74)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 42,298. **Ref:** Agayev (Aze)
Russia: Lunev - Fernandes (Smolnikov 64), Semenov, Neustadter, Rausch (Sorokin 87), Kuzyaev, Gazinsky (Kambolov 85), Ionov (Zobnin 62), Erokhin, Cheryshev (Stotsky 80), Zabolotniy (Poloz 73).
Czech Republic: Koubek - Coufal, Reznik, Kalas (Brabec 46), Boril, Soucek, Husbauer (Travnik 82), Jankto, Horava (Sykora 65), Zmrhal, Tecl (Krmencik 71).

Sep10 - Riyadh
Saudi Arabia 2 (Al Shehri 7, Al Dawsari 11)
Bolivia 2 (Campos 35, Martins Moreno pen 82)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Mateu Lahoz (Spa)

Tuesday, September 11

Sep11 - Landover, USA
Brazil 5 (Neymar pen 4, Richarlison 16, 50, Philippe Coutinho 30, Marquinhos 90)
El Salvador 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 28,511. **Ref:** Marrufo (USA)
Brazil: Neto - Eder Militao, Marquinhos, Dede (Felipe 46), Alex Sandro, Douglas Costa (Willian 54), Arthur (Andreas Pereira 70), Casemiro (Fred 46), Philippe Coutinho (Everton 54), Neymar, Richarlison (Lucas Paqueta 54).
El Salvador: Hernandez - Tamacas, Mendoza, Dominguez, Barahona, Flores (Castro 72), Alfaro (Orellana 36), Baires (Alvarez 30; Garcia 66), Alas (Corea 46), Pineda, Ceren.

Sep11 - East Rutherford, USA
Colombia 0
Argentina 0
Att: 35,000. **Ref:** Elfath (USA)
Colombia: Ospina - Palacios, D Sanchez, Murillo, Machado, Barrios, Cuellar (Uribe 62), Cuadrado (Diaz 78), Quintero (Benedetti 73), Falcao (Villa 78), Muriel (Bacca 62).
Argentina: Armani - Bustos, Pezzella, Funes Mori, Tagliafico (Simeone 85), Battaglia, Palacios (Dybala 54), Lo Celso (Pavon 70), Meza (Paredes 68), Icardi (Acuna 85), Martinez (Cervi 46).

Sep11 - Bridgeview, USA
Ecuador 2 (Valencia 82, Romario Ibarra 84)
Guatemala 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kellys (Pan)

Sep11 - Leicester
England 1 (Rashford 54)
Switzerland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,256. **Ref:** Turpin (Fra)
England: Butland - Walker, Tarkowski (Stones 61), Maguire, Alexander-Arnold (Trippier 78), Dier, Loftus-Cheek (Lingard 61), Delph (Henderson 68), Rose (Chilwell 79), Rashford, Welbeck (Kane 61).
Switzerland: Sommer - Schar, Djourou, Akanji (Mehmedi 46), Lichtsteiner, Zakaria (Fernandes 66), Xhaka, Freuler (Zuber 66), Rodriguez (Moubandje 46), Shaqiri (Seferovic 80), Gavranovic (Ajeti 67).

Sep11 - Libreville
Gabon 0
Zambia 1 (Shonga 16)
HT: 0-1

Sep11 - Bekasi
Indonesia 1 (Evan 90)
Mauritius 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,621. **Ref:** Tojo (Jap)

Sep11 - Osaka
Japan 3 (Oviedo og 16, Minamino 66, J Ito 90+3)
Costa Rica 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 33,891. **Ref:** Bin Jahari (Sin)
Japan: Higashiguchi - Muroya (Morita 82), Miura, Makino, Sasaki (Kurumaya 78), Aoyama (Misao 88), Endo, Doan (J Ito 85), Minamino, Nakajima (Amano 75), Kobayashi (Asano 68).
Costa Rica: Moreira (Briceno 46) - Brown, Duarte, Vargas (Colindres 67), Smith, Guzman, Cruz (Azofeifa 46), Oviedo (Hernandez 46), Leal (Marin 62), Ramirez, George (Moya 56).

Sep11 - Amman
Jordan 0
Oman 0

Sep11 - Nairobi
Kenya 1 (Kahata 77)
Malawi 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,500

Sep11 - Paynesville
Liberia 1 (Sharman pen 89)
Nigeria 2 (Onyekuru 11, Nwankwo 33)
HT: 0-2

Sep11 - Belfast
Northern Ireland 3 (Davis 13, Dallas 41, Whyte 67)
Israel 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 12,913. **Ref:** Nijhuis (Hol)
Northern Ireland: Carson (McGovern 46) - McNair, Cathcart, J Evans, Lewis, Davis, C Evans (Norwood 46), Saville (Smith 71), Dallas (Ferguson 78), Grigg (Washington 65), Jones (Whyte 65).
Israel: Haimov - Yeini, Tibi, Habashi (Kapiloto 46), Dasa (Bitton 65), Micha (Turgeman 59), Natcho, Peretz, Tawatha (Scheimann 40), Dabbur (Glazer 75), Hemed (Seba 59).

Sep11 - Panama City
Panama 0
Venezuela 2 (Rondon 66, 90+3)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Nation (Jam)

Sep11 - Wroclaw
Poland 1 (Klich 87)
Republic of Ireland 1 (O'Brien 54)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 24,455. **Ref:** Marhefka (Slk)
Poland: Szczesny - Kedziora, Glik (Bednarek 61), Kaminski, Reca (Pietrzak 72), Kurzawa (Kadzior 46), Krychowiak (Szymanski 73), Linetty, Milik, Blaszczykowski (Frankowski 81), Piatek (Klich 61).
Republic of Ireland: Randolph - Christie (Doherty 54), Keogh, Egan, Long, Stevens, Hendrick (Meyler 54), Williams (Hourihane 73), O'Dowda (Judge 90), O'Brien (Horgan 81), Robinson (Burke 63).

Sep11 - Doha
Qatar 3 (Almoez Ali 3, Afif 19, Al Haidos 29)
Palestine 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 1,766. **Ref:** Al Yaqoubi (Oma)

Sep11 - Singapore
Singapore 2 (Hariss 12, Ikhsan 13)
Fiji 0
HT: 2-0

Sep11 - Suwon
South Korea 0
Chile 0
Att: 40,127. **Ref:** Sato (Jap)
South Korea: Kim Jin-hyeon - Lee Yong (Kim Moon-hwan 89), Jang Hyun-soo, Kim Young-gwon, Hong Chul (Yun Suk-young 31), Ki Sung-yueng, Jung Woo-young (Hwang In-beom 74), Hwang Hee-chan (Moon Seon-min 86), Nam Tae-hee (Lee Jae-sung 64), Son Heung-min, Hwang Ui-jo (Ji Dong-won 58).
Chile: Arias - Isla, Lichnovsky, Maripan, Albornoz (Diaz 66), Medel, Valdes, Sagal (Rodriguez 87), Vidal (Hernandez 74), Rubio (Jeraldino 58), Aranguiz (Pulgar 46).

Sep11 - Palamos, Spain
United Arab Emirates 3 (Mabkhout 24, 26, O Abdulrahman 67)
Laos 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Verissimo (Por)

Sep11 - Nashville
United States 1 (Adams 71)
Mexico 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 40,194. **Ref:** Montero (CR)
United States: Steffen - Moore (Yedlin 85), Carter-Vickers, Miazga, Lichaj (Robinson 56), Trapp, Acosta (Roldan 85), Adams, McKennie (Green 40), Weah (Delgado 90+2), Zardes (Wood 80).
Mexico: H Gonzalez - Abella, Ayala, Alvarez, Alanis (Angulo 86), Arteaga, Lainez (E Hernandez 75), Guzman (Gallardo 80), Aguirre, Alvarado (Pulido 74), Zaldivar.
Sent off: Zaldivar 67.

Sep11 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 0
Iran 1 (Torabi 67)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 19,462. **Ref:** Mashentsev (Kyr)
Uzbekistan: Suyunov - Sayfiyev, Tukhtakhujaev, Ismailov, Denisov (Kozak 72), Akhmedov, Shukurov, Rashidov (Sabirkhodjaev 57), Bikmaev (Gafurov 46), Shomurodov (Tursunov 46), Abdukholikov (Sergeev 46).
Iran: Abedzadeh - Ghafouri (Moharrami 46), Pouraliganji, M Hosseini (Montazeri 62), Mohammadi, Ebrahimi, Ezatolahi (Shojaei 71), Gholizadeh, Dejagah (Ghoddos 46), Jahanbakhsh (Taremi 46), Ansarifard (Torabi 64).

Club football

AFRICA

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A
May 4: Al Ahly (Egy) 0 Esperance Tunis (Tun) 0; Township Rollers (Bot) 1 KCCA (Uga) 0.
May 15: Esperance Tunis 4 Township Rollers 1; KCCA 2 Al Ahly 0.
Jul 17: Al Ahly 3 Township Rollers 0; Esperance Tunis 3 KCCA 2.
Jul 28: KCCA 0 Esperance Tunis 1; Township Rollers 0 Al Ahly 1.
Aug 17: Esperance Tunis 0 Al Ahly 1.
Aug 18: KCCA 1 Township Rollers 0.
Aug 28: Al Ahly 4 KCCA 3; Township Rollers 0 Esperance Tunis 0.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Ahly (Q)	6	4	1	1	9	5	13
Esperance (Q)	6	3	2	1	8	4	11
KCCA	6	2	0	4	8	9	6
Township R	6	1	1	4	2	9	4

Group B
May 4: MC Alger (Alg) 1 Difaa El Jadida (Mor) 1.
May 5: TP Mazembe (DRC) 4 ES Setif (Alg) 1.
May 15: Difaa El Jadida 0 TP Mazembe 2; ES Setif 0 MC Alger 1.
Jul 17: ES Setif 2 Difaa El Jadida 1; TP Mazembe 1 MC Alger 0.
Jul 27: Difaa El Jadida 1 ES Setif 1.
Jul 28: MC Alger 1 TP Mazembe 1.
Aug 17: ES Setif 1 TP Mazembe 1.
Aug 18: Difaa El Jadida 2 MC Alger 0.
Aug 28: MC Alger 1 ES Setif 2; TP Mazembe 1 Difaa El Jadida 1.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TP Mazembe (Q)	6	3	3	0	10	4	12
ES Setif (Q)	6	2	2	2	7	9	8
Difaa El Jadida	6	1	3	2	6	7	6
MC Alger	6	1	2	3	4	7	5

Group C
May 5: Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf) 1 Wydad Casablanca (Mor) 1; Togo Port (Tog) 1 Horoya (Gui) 2.
May 15: Wydad Casablanca 3 Togo Port 0.
May 22: Horoya 2 Mamelodi Sundowns 2.
Jul 17: Horoya 1 Wydad Casablanca 1; Togo Port 1 Mamelodi Sundowns 0.
Jul 27: Mamelodi Sundowns 2 Togo Port 1.
Jul 28: Wydad Casablanca 2 Horoya 0.
Aug 17: Horoya 2 Togo Port 1; Wydad Casablanca 1 Mamelodi Sundowns 0.
Aug 28: Mamelodi Sundowns 0 Horoya 0; Togo Port 0 Wydad Casablanca 0.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wydad (Q)	6	3	3	0	8	2	12
Horoya (Q)	6	2	3	1	7	7	9
Mamelodi S	6	1	3	2	5	6	6
Togo Port	6	1	1	4	4	9	4

Group D
May 5: Primeiro Agosto (Ang) 1 Etoile Sahel (Tun) 1; Zesco United (Zam) 1 Mbabane Swallows (Swa) 1.
May 15: Mbabane Swallows 1 Primeiro Agosto 0.
May 16: Etoile Sahel 2 Zesco United 1.
Jul 17: Mbabane Swallows 0 Etoile Sahel 3; Zesco United 0 Primeiro Agosto 0.
Jul 27: Etoile Sahel 2 Mbabane Swallows 0; Primeiro Agosto 2 Zesco United 1.
Aug 18: Etoile Sahel 1 Primeiro Agosto 1; Mbabane Swallows 0 Zesco United 3.
Aug 28: Primeiro Agosto 2 Mbabane Swallows 1; Zesco United 1 Etoile Sahel 1.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Etoile Sahel (Q)	6	3	3	0	10	4	12
Pr'o Agosto (Q)	6	2	3	1	6	5	9
Zesco United	6	1	3	2	7	6	6
Mbabane S	6	1	1	4	3	11	4

● *The top 2 in each group qualified for the quarter-finals*

Quarter-finals
1st legs - Sep14/15; 2nd legs - Sep 21/22
ES Setif v Wydad Casablanca
1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0)
Esperance Tunis v Etoile Sahel
2-1, 1-0 (agg 3-1)
Horoya v Al Ahly
0-0, 0-4 (agg 0-4)
Primeiro Agosto v TP Mazembe
0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1, P Agosto on away goals)

CONFEDERATION CUP

Group A
May 6: ASEC Abidjan (IvC) 1 Aduana Stars (Gha) 0; Raja Casablanca (Mor) 0 AS Vita (DRC) 0.
May 16: Aduana Stars 3 Raja Casablanca 3; AS Vita 3 ASEC Abidjan 1.
Jul 18: Aduana Stars 2 AS Vita 1; ASEC Abidjan 0 Raja Casablanca 1.
Jul 29: AS Vita 2 Aduana Stars 0; Raja Casablanca 4 ASEC Abidjan 0.
Aug 19: Aduana Stars 0 ASEC Abidjan 2; AS Vita 2 Raja Casablanca 0.
Aug 29: ASEC Abidjan 2 AS Vita 0; Raja Casablanca 6 Aduana Stars 0.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Raja (Q)	6	3	2	1	14	5	11
AS Vita (Q)	6	3	1	2	8	5	10
ASEC Abidjan	6	3	0	3	6	8	9
Aduana Stars	6	1	1	4	5	15	4

Group B
May 6: Al Masry (Egy) 2 Uniao Songo (Moz) 0; RS Berkane (Mor) 1 Al Hilal Omdurman (Sud) 0.
May 16: Al Hilal Omdurman 1 Al Masry 1; Uniao Songo 0 RS Berkane 2.
Jul 18: Al Hilal Omdurman 2 Uniao Songo 2; RS Berkane 0 Al Masry 0.
Jul 29: Al Masry 1 RS Berkane 0; Uniao Songo 1 Al Hilal Omdurman 1.
Aug 19: Al Hilal Omdurman 0 RS Berkane 2; Uniao Songo 1 Al Masry 1.
Aug 29: Al Masry 2 Al Hilal Omdurman 0; RS Berkane 2 Uniao Songo 1.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
RS Berkane (Q)	6	4	1	1	7	2	13
Al Masry (Q)	6	3	3	0	7	2	12
Uniao Songo	6	0	3	3	5	10	3
Al Hilal Om	6	0	3	3	4	9	3

Group C
May 6: Enyimba (Nga) 2 Djoliba (Mli) 0; WAC (IvC) 1 CARA (Con) 0.
May 16: CARA 3 Enyimba 0; Djoliba 1 WAC 1.
Jul 18: Djoliba 2 CARA 0; Enyimba 1 WAC 0.
Jul 29: CARA 1 Djoliba 0; WAC 2 Enyimba 0.
Aug 19: CARA 3 WAC 1; Djoliba 0 Enyimba 1.
Aug 29: Enyimba 1 CARA 0; WAC 0 Djoliba 0.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enyimba (Q)	6	4	0	2	5	5	12
CARA (Q)	6	3	0	3	7	5	9
WAC	6	2	2	2	5	5	8
Djoliba	6	1	2	3	3	5	5

Group D
May 6: Rayon Sports (Rwa) 1 Gor Mahia (Ken) 1; USM Alger (Alg) 4 Young Africans (Tan) 0.
May 16: Gor Mahia 0 USM Alger 0; Young Africans 0 Rayon Sports 0.
Jul 18: Gor Mahia 4 Young Africans 0; Rayon Sports 1 USM Alger 2.
Jul 29: USM Alger 1 Rayon Sports 1; Young Africans 2 Gor Mahia 3.
Aug 19: Gor Mahia 1 Rayon Sports 2; Young Africans 2 USM Alger 1.
Aug 29: Rayon Sports 1 Young Africans 0; USM Alger 2 Gor Mahia 1.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USM Alger (Q)	6	3	2	1	10	5	11
Rayon Sp's (Q)	6	2	3	1	6	5	9
Gor Mahia	6	2	2	2	10	7	8
Young Africans	6	1	1	4	4	13	4

● *The top 2 in each group qualified for the quarter-finals*

Quarter-finals
1st legs - Sep16; 2nd legs - Sep 23
Al Masry v USM Alger 1-0, 1-0 (agg 2-0)
AS Vita v RS Berkane 3-1, 1-1 (agg 4-2)
CARA v Raja Casablanca 1-2, 0-1 (agg 1-3)
Rayon Sports v Enyimba 0-0, 1-5 (agg 1-5)

ANGOLA

2018 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pr'o Agosto (C)	28	15	12	1	31	8	57
Petro Atletico	28	14	12	2	38	15	54
Interclube	28	12	6	10	32	23	42
Recreativo L	28	10	10	8	28	26	40
Academica	28	9	11	8	19	21	38
Desp'vo Huila	28	8	12	8	16	17	36
S Esperanca	28	8	11	9	29	28	35
Bravos Maquis	28	9	7	12	23	27	34
Kabuscorp[1]	28	13	5	10	42	38	32
Sporting Cab'a	28	7	11	10	21	26	32
Cuando Cub'o	28	8	7	13	18	28	31
Recreativo C	28	8	7	13	22	36	31
Progresso S'a[2]	28	7	15	6	26	23	30
Domant (R)	28	5	10	13	24	38	25
1 de Maio (R)	28	4	10	14	23	38	22
JGM/Aca H[3] (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[1] 12pts deducted for failing to make payments
[2] 6pts deducted for failing to pay former player
[3] Withdrew mid-season for financial reasons; results annulled

ZANZIBAR

2017-18 – CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
JKU (C)	14	10	3	1	33	15	33
Zimamoto	14	10	2	2	21	9	32
KVZ	14	8	5	1	23	7	29
Mwenge	14	5	3	6	19	19	18
Mafunzo	14	4	3	7	12	13	15
Hard Rock	14	3	3	8	12	25	12
Jamhuri	14	2	5	7	11	19	11
Opec	14	2	0	12	17	41	6

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

1st knockout round (last 16)
1st legs

Aug 7
Estudiantes (Arg) 2 (Apaolaza 9, Campi 38)
Gremio (Bra) 1 (Kannemann 44)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Cunha (Uru)
Sent off: Zuqui (Estudiantes) 77

Aug 8
Boca Juniors (Arg) 2 (Abila 7, Zarate 43)
Libertad (Par) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Sampaio (Bra)

Colo Colo (Chl) 1 (Carmona 38)
Corinthians (Bra) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Roldan (Col)
Sent off: Gabriel (Corinthians) 54

Flamengo (Bra) 0
Cruzeiro (Bra) 2 (De Arrascaeta 10, Thiago Neves 78)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Pitana (Arg)

Aug 9
Atletico Tucuman (Arg) 2 (Diaz 8, Acosta 71)
Atletico Nacional (Col) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Aquino (Par)

Cerro Porteno (Par) 0
Palmeiras (Bra) 2 (Borja 47, 71)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Rapallini (Arg)

Racing Club (Arg) 0
River Plate (Arg) 0
Ref: Daronco (Bra)
Sent off: Ponzio (River Plate) 45+2

Aug 21
Independiente (Arg) 3
Santos (Bra) 0
Ref: Haro (Per)
Sent off: Dodo (Santos) 82
● *Awarded result, after Santos fielded an ineligible player in the tie, which had ended 0-0*

2nd legs

Aug 28
Atletico Nacional 1 (Duarte 12)
Atletico Tucuman 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Tobar (Chl)
Atletico Tucuman 2-1 on agg

Gremio 2 (Everton 6, Alisson 90+3)
Estudiantes 1 (Rodriguez 9)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Aquino (Par)
Agg 3-3; Gremio 5-3 on pens

Santos 0
Independiente 0
Ref: Bascunan (Chl)
Independiente 3-0 on agg

Aug 29
Corinthians 2 (Jadson pen 17, Roger 64)
Colo Colo 1 (Barrios 32)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Pitana (Arg)
Sent off: Danilo Avelar (Corinthians) 90+1
Agg 2-2; Colo Colo on away goals

Cruzeiro 0
Flamengo 1 (Leo Duarte 70)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Cunha (Uru)
Cruzeiro 2-1 on agg

River Plate 3 (Pratto 11, Palacios 28, Borre 81)
Racing Club 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Diaz de Vivar (Par)
Sent off: Perez (River Plate) 84; Centurion 84, Soto 90+1 (both Racing Club)
River Plate 3-0 on agg

Aug 30
Libertad 2 (O Cardozo 12, pen 39)
Boca Juniors 4 (Pavon 19, Zarate 22, Tevez 75, Cardona pen 80)
HT: 2-2. **Ref:** Roldan (Col)
BocaJuniors 6-2 on agg

Palmeiras 0
Cerro Porteno 1 (Arzamendia 57)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Delfino (Arg)
Sent off: Felipe Melo 6, Deyverson 90+4 (both Palmeiras); M Caceres (Cerro Porteno) 90+4
Palmeiras 2-1 on agg

ASIA

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals
1st legs - Aug 27-29; 2nd legs - Sep17-19
Al Duhail (Qat) v Persepolis (Irn)
1-0, 1-3 (agg 2-3)
Esteghlal Tehran (Irn) v Al Sadd (Qat)
1-3, 2-2 (agg 3-5)
Jeonbuk Motors (SKo) v Suwon Bluewings (SKo)
0-3, 3-0 (aet) (agg 3-3, Suwon 4-2 on pens)
Kashima Antlers (Jap) v Tianjin Quanjian (Chn)
2-0, 3-0 (agg 5-0)

MYANMAR

2018 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yangon Utd (C)	22	16	3	3	54	20	51
Shan United	22	15	5	2	33	13	50
Zwekapin	22	11	4	7	30	21	37
Hantharwady	22	11	3	8	36	23	36
Yadanarbon	22	9	7	6	47	30	34
Sthn My'mar	22	8	6	8	31	30	30
Magwe	22	8	6	8	26	26	30
Ayeyawady	22	8	5	9	38	45	29
Rakhine Utd	22	8	4	10	34	36	28
Sagaing Utd	22	5	6	11	27	40	21
GFA (R)	22	5	5	12	24	40	20
Myawady (R)	22	0	2	20	12	68	2

EUROPE

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final qualifying round
1st legs - Aug 21/22; 2nd legs - Aug 28/29
Ajax (Hol) v Dynamo Kiev (Ukr)
3-1, 0-0 (agg 3-1)
BATE Borisov (Bls) v PSV Eindhoven (Hol)
2-3, 0-3 (agg 2-6)
Benfica (Por) v PAOK Salonika (Gre)
1-1, 4-1 (agg 5-2)
Red Star Belgrade (Ser) v Salzburg (Aut)
0-0, 2-2 (agg 2-2, Red Star on away goals)
Vidi (Hun) v AEK Athens (Gre)
1-2, 1-1 (agg 2-3)
Young Boys (Swi) v Dinamo Zagreb (Cro)
1-1, 2-1 (agg 3-2)

● *Winning teams qualified for the group stage; losing teams entered the Europa League*

EUROPA LEAGUE

Final qualifying round
1st legs - Aug 23; 2nd legs - Aug 30
APOEL (Cyp) v Astana (Kaz) 1-0, 0-1 (aet) (agg 1-1, Astana 2-1 on pens); Atalanta (Ita) v Copenhagen (Den) 0-0, 0-0 (aet) (agg 0-0, Copenhagen 4-3 on pens); Basle (Swi) v Apollon (Cyp) 3-2, 0-1 (agg 3-3, Apollon on away goals); F91 Dudelange (Lux) v CFR Cluj (Rom) 2-0, 3-2 (agg 5-2); Genk (Blg) v Brondby (Den) 5-2, 4-2 (agg 9-4); Gent (Blg) v Bordeaux (Fra) 0-0, 0-2 (agg 0-2); Malmo (Swe) v Midtjylland (Den) 2-2, 2-0 (agg 4-2); Olimpija Ljubljana (Sln) v Spartak Trnava (Slk) 0-2, 1-1 (agg 1-3); Olympiakos (Gre) v Burnley (Eng) 3-1, 1-1 (agg 4-2); Partizan Belgrade (Ser) v Besiktas (Tur) 1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4); Rangers (Sco) v Ufa (Rus) 1-0, 1-1 (agg 2-1); Rapid Vienna (Aut) v FCSB (Rom) 3-1, 1-2 (agg 4-3); Rosenborg (Nor) v Shkendija (Mac) 3-1, 2-0 (agg 5-1); Sarpsborg (Nor) v Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr) 3-1, 1-2 (agg 4-3); Sheriff (Mol) v Qarabag (Aze) 1-0, 0-3 (agg 1-3); Sigma Olomouc (CzR) v Sevilla (Spa) 0-1, 0-3 (agg 0-4); Suduva (Lit) v Celtic (Sco) 1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4); Torpedo Kutaisi (Geo) v Ludogorets (Bul) 0-1, 0-4 (agg 0-5); Trencin (Slk) v AEK Larnaca (Cyp) 1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4); Zenit St Petersburg (Rus) v Molde (Nor) 3-1, 1-2 (agg 4-3); Zorya (Ukr) v RB Leipzig (Ger) 0-0, 2-3 (agg 2-3)

● *Winners qualified for the group stage*

CONCACAF

CONCACAF LEAGUE

Quarter-finals
1st legs - Aug 21-23; 2nd legs - Aug 28-30
FAS (ESv) v Arabe Unido (Pan)
0-1, 1-3 (agg 1-4)
Herediano (CR) v Universitario (Pan)
3-0, 2-1 (agg 5-1)
Motagua (Hnd) v Portmore United (Jam)
3-2, 2-0 (agg 5-2)
Tauro (Pan) v Walter Ferretti (Nic)
3-1, 4-0 (agg 7-1)

GUYANA

2017-18 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fruta Conq's (C)	18	14	3	1	51	6	45
GDF	18	12	4	2	40	13	40
Den Amstel	18	12	3	3	46	12	39
Western Tigers	18	11	5	2	31	15	38
Victoria Kings	18	7	3	8	26	27	24
Buxton United	18	5	5	8	17	27	20
Milerock	18	4	3	11	19	33	15
Ann's Grove U	18	3	5	10	20	35	14
New Amst Utd	18	2	4	12	8	38	10
Cougars	18	2	1	15	10	62	7

TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS

2018 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ac Jaguars (C)	10	7	2	1	35	11	23
Cheshire Hall	10	7	0	3	29	20	21
Full Physic[1]	9	6	1	2	19	15	19
SWA Sharks[1]	9	5	1	3	35	16	16
Beaches	10	1	0	9	13	39	3
Acad Eagles	10	1	0	9	11	41	3

[1] Remaining game cancelled

OCEANIA

FIJI

2018 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lautoka (C)	14	9	4	1	27	10	31
Ba	14	7	5	2	26	15	26
Nadi	14	7	3	4	21	13	24
Suva	14	5	4	5	20	18	19
Labasa	14	5	4	5	18	17	19
Rewa	14	3	4	7	12	18	13
Tavua	14	3	3	8	14	30	12
Dreketi (R)	14	1	5	8	11	28	8

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions
(R) = relegated
(Q) = qualified for next stage
(QF) = qualified for finals

October 2018 Vol 59 No 2

EDITOR Gavin Hamilton
ASSISTANT EDITOR Nich Hills
DESIGN DIRECTOR Kevin Eason
DESIGN EDITOR Jamie Latchford
DEPUTY DESIGN EDITOR Daniel Franklin
PICTURE EDITOR Duncan Bond

PICTURES
Pictures copyright: Getty Images, Press Association Images

Thanks this issue to
Peter Neish

EDITORIAL
Pinehurst 2, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough Business Park, Farnborough, Hants GU14 7BF
Email: world_soccer@ti-media.com
General enquiries: +44 (0) 1252 555213

ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP
Matthew Johnston
Tel: +44 (0) 1252 555367
Email: matthew.johnston@ti-media.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER Nigel Davies
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Gareth Beesley
GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR Andrea Davies

International licensing enquiries
+44 (0) 20 314 85490
Email: bianca.hamilton-foster@ti-media.com

TI Media

SUBSCRIPTIONS ORDER HOTLINE
+44 (0)333 333 1113
Lines open Mon-Sat, 8am-6pm, UK time
US toll free: 1 888 313 5528
Lines open Mon-Sat 7am-12 Mid Central Time
or visit magazinesdirect.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES
Annual sub is for 12 months (13 issues, prices include postage) UK: £68.15 Europe/Eire (inc. VAT): 98.85 euros (airmail) USA: $144.48 (airmail) Rest of world: £99.25 (airmail)

Periodicals paid at Rahway, NJ Postmaster: send address changes to *World Soccer*, c/o MAIL America, 365 Blair Road, Avenel NJ 07001, USA. USPS004075

SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPARTMENT
WORLD SOCCER SUBSCRIPTIONS
PO Box 20501, 1001 NM Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel: +44 (0) 330 333 1113

WorldSoccer is a member of ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

● A Bola (Portugal) ● De Telegraaf (Holland) ● ElfVoetbal (Holland) ● Fanatik (Turkey) ● Frankfurter Allgemeine (Germany) ● La Gazzetta dello Sport (Italy) ● Kicker (Germany) ● Marca (Spain) ● Nemzeti Sport (Hungary) ● Sport-Express (Russia) ● Sport/Foot (Belgium) ● TIPS Bladet (Denmark) ● World Soccer (UK)

ipso. Regulated

ITALY: SERIE A

ATALANTA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Etrit **BERISHA** (Alb)	(29) 10.03.89
95	Pierluigi **GOLLINI**	(23) 18.03.95
31	Francesco **ROSSI**	(27) 27.04.91

DEFENDERS

53	Ali **ADNAN** (Irq)	(24) 19.12.93
13	Davide **BETTELLA**	(18) 07.04.00
21	Timothy **CASTAGNE** (Blg)	(22) 05.12.95
19	Berat **DJIMSITI** (Alb)	(25) 19.02.93
8	Robin **GOSENS** (Ger)	(24) 05.07.94
33	Hans **HATEBOER** (Hol)	(24) 09.01.94
23	Gianluca **MANCINI**	(22) 17.04.96
5	Andrea **MASIELLO**	(32) 05.02.86
6	Jose Luis **PALOMINO** (Arg)	(28) 05.01.90
3	Rafael **TOLOI** (Bra)	(27) 10.10.90
30	Marco **VARNIER**	(20) 08.06.98

MIDFIELDERS

15	Marten **DE ROON** (Hol)	(27) 29.03.91
11	Remo **FREULER** (Swi)	(26) 15.04.92
10	Alejandro **GOMEZ** (Arg)	(30) 15.02.88
72	Josip **ILICIC** (Sln)	(30) 29.01.88
88	Mario **PASALIC** (Cro)	(23) 09.02.95
22	Matteo **PESSINA**	(21) 21.04.97
7	Arkadiusz **RECA** (Pol)	(23) 17.06.95
24	Emiliano **RIGONI** (Arg)	(25) 04.02.93
4	Luca **VALZANIA**	(22) 05.03.96

FORWARDS

99	Musa **BARROW** (Gam)	(19) 14.11.98
20	Marco **TUMMINELLO**	(19) 06.11.98
91	Duvan **ZAPATA** (Col)	(27) 01.04.91

COACH

Gian Piero **GASPERINI**	(60) 26.01.58

BOLOGNA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Angelo **DA COSTA** (Bra)	(34) 12.11.83
29	Antonio **SANTURRO**	(26) 29.02.92
28	Lukasz **SKORUPSKI** (Pol)	(27) 05.05.91
99	Caio **PIRANA** (Bra)	(19) 08.05.99

DEFENDERS

33	Arturo **CALABRESI**	(22) 17.03.96
25	Gabriele **CORBO**	(18) 11.01.00
23	**DANILO** (Bra)	(34) 10.05.84
4	Sebastian **DE MAIO** (Fra)	(31) 05.0387
35	Mitchell **DIJKS** (Hol)	(25) 09.02.93
3	Giancarlo **GONZALEZ** (CR)	(30) 08.02.88
18	Filip **HELANDER** (Swe)	(25) 22.04.93
54	Lirim **KASTRATI** (Kos)	(19) 02.02.99
14	Federico **MATTIELLO**	(23) 14.07.95
15	Ibrahima **MBAYE** (Sen)	(23) 19.11.94
6	Nehuen **PAZ** (Arg)	(25) 28.04.93

MIDFIELDERS

17	Godfred **DONSAH** (Gha)	(22) 07.06.96
31	Blerim **DZEMAILI** (Swi)	(32) 12.04.86
11	Ladislav **KREJCI** (CzR)	(26) 05.07.92
-	Alessio **MILITARI**	(19) 15.01.99
8	Adam **NAGY** (Hun)	(23) 17.06.95
16	Andrea **POLI**	(29) 29.09.89
5	Erick **PULGAR** (Chl)	(24) 15.01.94
32	Mattias **SVANBERG** (Swe)	(19) 05.01.99
19	Juan **MANUEL VALENCIA** (Col)	(20) 20.06.98

FORWARDS

22	Mattia **DESTRO**	(27) 20.03.91
91	Diego **FALCINELLI**	(27) 26.06.91
53	Kaloyan **KRASTEV**	(19) 24.01.99
30	Orji **OKWONKWO** (Nga)	(20) 19.01.98
7	Riccardo **ORSOLINI**	(21) 24.01.97
24	Rodrigo **PALACIO** (Arg)	(36) 05.02.82
9	Federico **SANTANDER** (Par)	(27) 04.06.91

COACH

Filippo **INZAGHI**	(45) 09.08.73

CAGLIARI

GOALKEEPERS

16	Simone **ARESTI**	(32) 15.03.86
28	Alessio **CRAGNO**	(24) 28.06.94
12	Riccardo **DAGA**	(18) 13.01.00
1	**RAFAEL** (Bra)	(36) 03.03.82

DEFENDERS

3	Marco **ANDREOLLI**	(32) 10.06.86
23	Luca **CEPPITELLI**	(28) 08.11.89
15	Ragnar **KLAVAN** (Est)	(32) 30.10.85
22	Charalambos **LYKOGIANNIS** (Gre)	(24) 22.10.93
19	Fabio **PISACANE**	(32) 28.01.86
56	Filippo **ROMAGNA**	(21) 26.05.97
33	Darijo **SRNA** (Cro)	(36) 01.05.82

MIDFIELDERS

18	Nicolo **BARELLA**	(21) 07.02.97
6	Filip **BRADARIC** (Cro)	(26) 11.01.92
29	Lucas **CASTRO** (Arg)	(29) 09.04.89
8	Luca **CIGARINI**	(32) 20.06.86
4	Daniele **DESSENA**	(31) 10.05.87
24	Paolo **FARAGO**	(25) 12.02.93
21	Artur **IONITA** (Mol)	(28) 17.08.90
10	**JOAO PEDRO** (Bra)	(26) 09.03.92
2	Marko **PAJAC** (Cro)	(25) 11.05.93
20	Simone **PADOIN**	(34) 18.03.84

FORWARDS

9	Alberto **CERRI**	(22) 16.04.96
17	Diego **FARIAS** (Bra)	(28) 10.05.90
30	Leonardo **PAVOLETTI**	(29) 26.11.88
25	Marco **SAU**	(30) 03.11.87

COACH

Rolando **MARAN**	(55) 14.07.63

CHIEVO

GOALKEEPERS

67	Elia **CAPRILE**	(17) 25.08.01
16	Andrea **SECULIN**	(28) 14.07.90
1	Adrian **SEMPER** (Cro)	(20) 12.01.98
70	Stefano **SORRENTINO**	(39) 28.03.79

DEFENDERS

14	Mattia **BANI**	(24) 10.12.93
5	Federico **BARBA**	(24) 01.09.93
29	Fabrizio **CACCIATORE**	(31) 08.10.86
12	Boštjan **CESAR** (Sln)	(36) 09.07.82
44	Pawel **JAROSZYNSKI** (Pol)	(24) 02.10.94
91	Michele **RIGIONE**	(27) 07.03.91
15	Luca **ROSSETTINI**	(33) 09.05.85
3	Strahinja **TANASIJEVIC** (Ser)	(21) 12.06.97
40	Nenad **TOMOVIC** (Ser)	(31) 30.08.87

MIDFIELDERS

23	Valter **BIRSA** (Sln)	(32) 07.08.86
21	Mauro **BURRUCHAGA** (Arg)	(20) 27.06.98
-	Antonio **CINELLI**	(28) 08.12.89
27	Fabio **DEPAOLI**	(21) 24.04.97
17	Emanuele **GIACCHERINI**	(33) 05.05.85
56	Perparim **HETEMAJ** (Fin)	(31) 12.12.86
19	Musa **JUWARA** (Gam)	(16) 26.12.01
13	Sofian **KIYINE** (Mor)	(21) 02.10.97
11	Mehdi **LERIS** (Fra)	(20) 23.05.98
22	Joel **OBI** (Nga)	(27) 22.05.91
8	Ivan **RADOVANOVIC** (Ser)	(30) 29.08.88
4	Nicola **RIGONI**	(27) 12.11.90
55	Emanuel **VIGNATO**	(18) 24.08.00

FORWARDS

20	Filip **DORDEVIC** (Ser)	(31) 28.09.87
25	Sergej **GRUBAC** (Mne)	(18) 29.05.00
69	Riccardo **MEGGIORINI**	(33) 04.09.85
31	Sergio **PELLISSIER**	(39) 12.04.79
10	Manuel **PUCCIARELLI**	(27) 17.06.91
9	Mariusz **STEPINSKI** (Pol)	(23) 12.05.95

COACH

Lorenzo **D'ANNA**	(46) 29.01.72

EMPOLI

GOALKEEPERS

99	Andrea **FULIGNATI**	(23) 31.10.94
1	Ivan **PROVEDEL**	(24) 17.03.94
21	Pietro **TERRACCIANO**	(28) 08.03.90

DEFENDERS

13	Luca **ANTONELLI**	(31) 11.02.87
2	Giovanni **DI LORENZO**	(25) 04.08.93
22	Domenico **MAIETTA**	(36) 03.08.82
29	Michal **MARCJANIK** (Pol)	(23) 15.12.94
23	Manuel **PASQUAL**	(36) 13.03.82
15	Lorenzo **POLVANI**	(24) 26.07.94
32	Jacob **RASMUSSEN** (Den)	(21) 28.05.97
26	Matias **SILVESTRE** (Arg)	(34) 25.09.84
27	Joel **UNTERSEE** (SAf)	(24) 11.02.94
5	Freddie **VESELI** (Alb)	(25) 20.11.92

MIDFIELDERS

18	Afriyie **ACQUAH** (Gha)	(26) 05.01.92
10	Ismael **BENNACER** (Alg)	(20) 01.12.97
4	Matteo **BRIGHI**	(37) 14.02.81
28	Leonardo **CAPEZZI**	(23) 28.03.95
33	Rade **KRUNIC** (Bos)	(24) 07.10.93
17	Lorenzo **LOLLO**	(27) 08.12.90
8	Hamed **TRAORE** (IvC)	(18) 16.02.00
48	Salih **UCAN** (Tur)	(24) 06.01.94
6	Miha **ZAJC** (Sln)	(24) 01.07.94

FORWARDS

11	Francesco **CAPUTO**	(31) 06.08.87
19	Arnel **JAKUPOVIC** (Aut)	(20) 29.05.98
20	Antonino **LA GUMINA**	(22) 06.03.96
7	Levan **MCHEDLIDZE** (Geo)	(28) 24.03.90
66	Samuel **MRAZ** (Slk)	(21) 13.05.97
9	Alejandro **RODRIGUEZ** (Spa)	(27) 30.07.91

COACH

Aurelio **ANDREAZZOLI**	(64) 05.11.53

FIORENTINA

GOALKEEPERS

33	Federico **BRANCOLINI**	(17) 14.07.01
69	Bartlomiej **DRAGOWSKI** (Pol)	(21) 19.08.97
67	Simone **GHIDOTTI**	(18) 19.03.00
1	Alban **LAFONT** (Fra)	(19) 23.01.99

DEFENDERS

3	Cristiano **BIRAGHI**	(26) 01.09.92
5	Federico **CECCHERINI**	(26) 11.05.92
34	Kevin **DIKS** (Hol)	(21) 06.10.96
16	David **HANCKO** (Slk)	(20) 13.12.97
2	Vincent **LAURINI** (Fra)	(29) 10.06.89
4	Nikola **MILENKOVIC** (Ser)	(20) 12.10.97
15	Maximiliano **OLIVERA** (Uru)	(26) 05.03.92
20	German **PEZZELLA** (Arg)	(27) 27.06.91
31	**VITOR HUGO** (Bra)	(27) 20.05.91

MIDFIELDERS

24	Marco **BENASSI**	(24) 08.09.94
14	Bryan **DABO** (BuF)	(26) 18.02.92
-	Abdou **DIAKHATE** (Sen)	(19) 31.12.98
7	Valentin **EYSSERIC** (Fra)	(26) 25.03.92
26	Edimilson **FERNANDES** (Swi)	(22) 15.04.96
8	**GERSON** (Bra)	(21) 20.05.97
18	Nicky **MEDJA** (Cam)	(18) 16.02.00
19	Cristobal **MONTIEL** (Spa)	(18) 11.04.00
6	Christian **NORGAARD** (Den)	(24) 10.03.94
17	Jordan **VERETOUT** (Fra)	(25) 01.03.93

FORWARDS

25	Federico **CHIESA**	(20) 25.10.97
27	Martin **GRAICIAR** (CzR)	(19) 11.04.99
73	Marco **MELI**	(18) 02.02.00
11	Kevin **MIRALLAS** (Blg)	(31) 05.10.87
10	Marko **PJACA** (Cro)	(23) 06.05.95
21	Riccardo **SOTTIL**	(19) 03.06.99
9	Giovanni **SIMEONE** (Arg)	(23) 05.07.95
77	Cyril **THEREAU** (Fra)	(35) 24.04.83
28	Dusan **VLAHOVIC** (Ser)	(18) 28.01.00

COACH

Stefano **PIOLI**	(52) 20.10.65

FROSINONE

GOALKEEPERS

22	Francesco **BARDI**	(26) 18.01.92
91	Alessandro **IACOBUCCI**	(27) 03.06.91
57	Marco **SPORTIELLO**	(26) 10.05.92

DEFENDERS

15	Lorenzo **ARIAUDO**	(29) 11.06.89
23	Nicolo **BRIGHENTI**	(29) 01.08.89
25	Marco **CAPUANO**	(26) 14.10.91
6	Edoardo **GOLDANIGA**	(24) 02.11.93
32	Luka **KRAJNC** (Sln)	(24) 19.09.94
3	Cristian **MOLINARO**	(35) 30.07.83
27	Bartosz **SALAMON** (Pol)	(27) 01.05.91
17	Francesco **ZAMPANO**	(25) 30.09.93

MIDFIELDERS

33	Andrea **BEGHETTO**	(23) 11.10.94
31	Emmanuel **BESEA** (Gha)	(21) 15.04.97
24	Francesco **CASSATA**	(21) 16.07.97
66	Raman **CHIBSAH** (Gha)	(25) 10.03.93
88	Lorenzo **CRISETIG**	(25) 20.01.93
14	Andrea **ERRICO**	(19) 01.01.99
2	Paolo **GHIGLIONE**	(21) 02.02.97
5	Mirko **GORI**	(25) 04.02.93
20	Emil **HALLFREDSSON** (Ice)	(34) 29.06.84
8	Raffaele **MAIELLO**	(27) 10.07.91
7	Luca **PAGANINI**	(25) 08.06.93
21	Paolo **SAMMARCO**	(35) 17.03.83
10	Danilo **SODDIMO**	(30) 27.09.87
4	Rai **VLOET** (Hol)	(23) 08.05.95

FORWARDS

99	Joaquin **ARDAIZ** (Uru)	(19) 11.01.99
29	Joel **CAMPBELL** (CR)	(26) 26.06.92
28	Camillo **CIANO**	(28) 22.02.90
9	Daniel **CIOFANI**	(33) 31.07.85
18	Federico **DIONISI**	(31) 16.06.87
19	Luca **MATARESE**	(20) 16.04.98
11	Stipe **PERICA** (Cro)	(23) 07.07.95
89	Andrea **PINAMONTI**	(19) 19.05.99

COACH

Moreno **LONGO**	(42) 14.02.76

GENOA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Federico **MARCHETTI**	(35) 07.02.83
97	Ionut **RADU** (Rom)	(21) 28.05.97
23	Alessandro **RUSSO**	(17) 31.03.01
25	Rok **VODISEK** (Sln)	(19) 05.12.98

DEFENDERS

14	Davide **BIRASCHI**	(24) 02.07.94
4	Domenico **CRISCITO**	(31) 30.12.86
3	Koray **GUNTER** (Ger)	(24) 16.08.94
33	Ivan **LAKICEVIC** (Ser)	(25) 27.07.93
5	Lisandro **LOPEZ** (Arg)	(29) 01.09.89
32	Pedro **PEREIRA** (Por)	(20) 22.01.98
17	Cristian **ROMERO** (Arg)	(20) 27.04.98
2	Nicolas **SPOLLI** (Arg)	(35) 20.02.83
87	Ervin **ZUKANOVIC** (Bos)	(31) 11.02.87

MIDFIELDERS

24	Daniel **BESSA**	(25) 14.01.93
88	Oscar **HILJEMARK** (Swe)	(26) 28.06.92
22	Darko **LAZOVIC** (Ser)	(28) 15.09.90
15	Luca **MAZZITELLI**	(22) 15.11.95
40	Stephane **OMEONGA** (Blg)	(22) 27.03.96
18	Esteban **ROLON** (Arg)	(23) 25.03.95
8	**ROMULO**	(31) 22.05.87
30	**SANDRO** (Bra)	(29) 15.03.89

FORWARDS

26	Nicola **DALMONTE**	(21) 13.09.97
39	Andrea **FAVILLI**	(21) 17.05.97
11	Christian **KOUAME** (IvC)	(20) 06.12.97
10	Gianluca **LAPADULA**	(28) 07.02.90
45	Iuri **MEDEIROS** (Por)	(24) 10.07.94
19	Goran **PANDEV** (Mac)	(35) 27.07.83
9	Krzysztof **PIATEK** (Pol)	(23) 01.07.95

COACH

Davide **BALLARDINI**	(54) 06.01.64

INTERNAZIONALE

GOALKEEPERS

46	Tommaso **BERNI**	(35) 06.03.83
1	Samir **HANDANOVIC** (Sln)	(34) 14.07.84
27	Daniele **PADELLI**	(32) 25.10.85

DEFENDERS

29	**DALBERT HENRIQUE** (Bra)	(25) 08.09.93
33	Danilo **D'AMBROSIO**	(30) 09.09.88
6	Stefan **DE VRIJ** (Hol)	(26) 05.02.92
23	Joao **MIRANDA** (Bra)	(34) 07.09.84
13	Andrea **RANOCCHIA**	(30) 16.02.88
37	Milan **SKRINIAR** (Slk)	(23) 11.02.95
2	Sime **VRSALJKO** (Cro)	(26) 10.01.92

MIDFIELDERS

18	Kwadwo **ASAMOAH** (Gha)	(29) 09.12.88
77	Marcelo **BROZOVIC** (Cro)	(25) 16.11.92
87	Antonio **CANDREVA**	(31) 28.02.87
5	Roberto **GAGLIARDINI**	(24) 07.04.94
15	**JOAO MARIO** (Por)	(25) 19.01.93
14	Radja **NAINGGOLAN** (Blg)	(30) 04.05.88
44	Ivan **PERISIC** (Cro)	(29) 02.02.89
20	Borja **VALERO** (Spa)	(33) 12.01.85
8	Matias **VECINO** (Uru)	(27) 24.08.91

FORWARDS

11	Keita **BALDE** (Sen)	(23) 08.03.95
9	Mauro **ICARDI** (Arg)	(25) 19.02.93
10	Lautaro **MARTINEZ** (Arg)	(21) 22.08.97
16	Matteo **POLITANO**	(25) 03.08.93

COACH

Luciano **SPALLETTI**	(59) 07.03.59

JUVENTUS

GOALKEEPERS

22	Mattia **PERIN**	(25) 10.11.92
21	Carlo **PINSOGLIO**	(28) 16.03.90
1	Wojciech **SZCZESNY** (Pol)	(28) 18.04.90

DEFENDERS

12	**ALEX SANDRO** (Bra)	(27) 26.01.91
15	Andrea **BARZAGLI**	(37) 08.05.81
4	Mehdi **BENATIA** (Mor)	(31) 17.04.87
19	Leonardo **BONUCCI**	(31) 01.05.87
20	Joao **CANCELO** (Por)	(24) 27.05.94
3	Giorgio **CHIELLINI**	(34) 14.08.84
2	Mattia **DE SCIGLIO**	(25) 20.10.92
24	Daniele **RUGANI**	(24) 29.07.94
37	Leonardo **SPINAZZOLA**	(25) 25.03.93

MIDFIELDERS

30	Rodrigo **BENTANCUR** (Uru)	(21) 05.06.97
23	Emre **CAN** (Ger)	(24) 12.01.94
11	Douglas **COSTA** (Bra)	(28) 14.09.90
16	Juan **CUADRADO** (Col)	(30) 26.05.88
6	Sami **KHEDIRA** (Ger)	(31) 04.04.87
14	Blaise **MATUIDI** (Fra)	(31) 09.04.87
5	Miralem **PJANIC** (Bos)	(28) 02.04.90

FORWARDS

33	Federico **BERNARDESCHI**	(24) 16.02.94
10	Paulo **DYBALA** (Arg)	(24) 15.11.93
18	Moise **KEAN**	(18) 28.02.00
17	Mario **MANDZUKIC** (Cro)	(32) 21.05.86
7	Cristiano **RONALDO** (Por)	(33) 05.02.85

COACH

Massimiliano **ALLEGRI**	(51) 11.08.67

LAZIO

GOALKEEPERS
23 Guido **GUERRIERI** (22) 25.02.96
24 Silvio **PROTO** (Blg) (35) 23.05.83
1 Thomas **STRAKOSHA** (Alb) (23) 19.03.95

DEFENDERS
33 Francesco **ACERBI** (30) 10.02.88
8 Dusan **BASTA** (Ser) (34) 18.08.84
15 **BASTOS** (Ang) (27) 23.11.91
22 Martin **CACERES** (Uru) (31) 07.04.87
14 Riza **DURMISI** (Den) (24) 08.01.94
48 Lorenzo **FILIPPINI** (23) 28.07.95
3 **LUIZ FELIPE** (Bra) (21) 22.03.97
5 Jordan **LUKAKU** (Blg) (24) 25.07.94
77 Adam **MARUSIC** (Mne) (25) 17.10.92
4 **PATRIC** (Spa) (25) 17.04.93
26 Stefan **RADU** (Rom) (31) 22.10.86
13 **WALLACE** (Bra) (23) 14.10.94

MIDFIELDERS
25 Milan **BADELJ** (Cro) (29) 25.02.89
7 Valon **BERISHA** (Kos) (25) 07.02.93
32 Danilo **CATALDI** (24) 06.08.94
11 Joaquin **CORREA** (Arg) (24) 13.08.94
66 Bruno **JORDAO** (Por) (19) 12.10.98
6 **LUCAS LEIVA** (Bra) (31) 09.01.87
10 **LUIS ALBERTO** (Spa) (26) 28.09.92
19 Senad **LULIC** (Bos) (32) 18.01.86
21 Sergej **MILINKOVIC-SAVIC** (Ser) (23) 27.02.95
28 Joseph **MINALA** (Cam) (22) 16.08.96
96 Alessandro **MURGIA** (22) 09.08.96
16 Marco **PAROLO** (33) 25.01.85

FORWARDS
20 Felipe **CAICEDO** (Ecu) (30) 05.09.88
17 Ciro **IMMOBILE** (28) 20.02.90
87 Cristiano **LOMBARDI** (23) 19.08.95
30 Pedro **NETO** (Por) (18) 09.03.00
97 Alessandro **ROSSI** (21) 03.01.97

COACH
Simone **INZAGHI** (42) 05.04.76

MILAN

GOALKEEPERS
90 Antonio **DONNARUMMA** (28) 07.07.90
99 Gianluigi **DONNARUMMA** (19) 25.02.99
35 Alessandro **PLIZZARI** (18) 12.03.00
25 Pepe **REINA** (Spa) (36) 31.08.82

DEFENDERS
20 Ignazio **ABATE** (31) 12.11.86
2 Davide **CALABRIA** (21) 06.12.96
33 Mattia **CALDARA** (24) 05.05.94
12 Andrea **CONTI** (24) 02.03.94
22 Mateo **MUSACCHIO** (Arg) (28) 26.08.90
68 Ricardo **RODRIGUEZ** (Swi) (26) 25.08.92
13 Alessio **ROMAGNOLI** (23) 12.01.95
56 Stefan **SIMIC** (CzR) (23) 20.01.95
23 Ivan **STRINIC** (Cro) (31) 17.07.87
17 Cristian **ZAPATA** (Col) (32) 30.09.86

MIDFIELDERS
14 Tiemoue **BAKAYOKO** (Fra) (24) 17.08.94
16 Andrea **BERTOLACCI** (27) 11.01.91
21 Lucas **BIGLIA** (Arg) (32) 30.01.86
5 Giacomo **BONAVENTURA** (29) 22.08.89
10 Hakan **CALHANOGLU** (Tur) (24) 08.02.94
7 Samu **CASTILLEJO** (Spa) (23) 18.01.95
77 Alen **HALILOVIC** (Cro) (22) 18.06.96
79 Franck **KESSIE** (IvC) (21) 19.12.96
93 Diego **LAXALT** (Uru) (25) 07.02.93
4 Jose **MAURI** (22) 16.05.96
18 Riccardo **MONTOLIVO** (33) 18.01.85

FORWARDS
11 Fabio **BORINI** (27) 29.03.91
63 Patrick **CUTRONE** (20) 03.01.98
9 Gonzalo **HIGUAIN** (Arg) (30) 10.12.87
8 **SUSO** (Spa) (24) 19.11.93

COACH
Gennaro **GATTUSO** (40) 09.01.78

NAPOLI

GOALKEEPERS
22 Alessandro **D'ANDREA** (18) 22.03.00
27 Orestis **KARNEZIS** (Gre) (33) 11.07.85
1 Alex **MERET** (21) 22.03.97
25 David **OSPINA** (Col) (30) 31.08.88

DEFENDERS
33 Raul **ALBIOL** (Spa) (33) 04.09.85
21 Vlad **CHIRICHES** (Rom) (28) 14.11.89
31 Faouzi **GHOULAM** (Alg) (27) 01.02.91
23 Elseid **HYSAJ** (Alb) (24) 02.02.94
26 Kalidou **KOULIBALY** (Fra) (27) 20.06.91
13 Sebastiano **LUPERTO** (22) 06.09.96
2 Kevin **MALCUIT** (Fra) (27) 31.07.91
19 Nikola **MAKSIMOVIC** (Ser) (26) 25.11.91
6 **MARIO RUI** (Por) (27) 27.05.91

MIDFIELDERS
5 **ALLAN** (Bra) (27) 08.01.91
42 Amadou **DIAWARA** (Gui) (21) 17.07.97
17 Marek **HAMSIK** (Slk) (31) 27.07.87
11 Adam **OUNAS** (Fra) (21) 11.11.96
30 Marko **ROG** (Cro) (23) 19.07.95
8 Fabian **RUIZ** (Spa) (22) 03.04.96
20 Piotr **ZIELINSKI** (Pol) (24) 20.05.94

FORWARDS
7 Jose **CALLEJON** (Spa) (31) 11.02.87
24 Lorenzo **INSIGNE** (27) 04.06.91
14 Dries **MERTENS** (Blg) (31) 06.05.87
99 Arkadiusz **MILIK** (Pol) (24) 28.02.94
9 Simone **VERDI** (26) 12.07.92
34 Amin **YOUNES** (Ger) (25) 06.08.93

COACH
Carlo **ANCELOTTI** (59) 10.06.59

PARMA

GOALKEEPERS
56 Fabrizio **BAGHERIA** (17) 05.04.01
1 Pierluigi **FRATTALI** (32) 01.12.85
55 Luigi **SEPE** (27) 08.05.91

DEFENDERS
22 Bruno **ALVES** (Por) (36) 27.11.81
95 Alessandro **BASTONI** (19) 13.04.99
59 Valerio **DI CESARE** (35) 23.05.83
54 Andrea **DI MAGLIO** (18) 14.08.00
3 Federico **DIMARCO** (20) 10.11.97
28 Riccardo **GAGLIOLO** (28) 28.04.90
23 Marcello **GAZZOLA** (33) 03.04.85
18 Massimo **GOBBI** (37) 31.10.80
2 Simone **IACOPONI** (31) 30.04.87
13 Francisco **SIERRALTA** (Chl) (21) 06.05.97

MIDFIELDERS
99 Yves **BARAYE** (Sen) (26) 22.06.92
17 Antonino **BARILLA** (30) 01.04.88
77 Jonathan **BIABIANY** (Fra) (30) 28.04.88
71 Giuseppe **CARRIERO** (21) 04.09.97
10 Amato **CICIRETTI** (24) 31.12.93
7 Alessio **DA CRUZ** (Hol) (21) 18 .01.97
8 Alessandro **DEIOLA** (23) 01.08.95
33 Jacopo **DEZI** (26) 10.02.92
20 Antonio **DI GAUDIO** (29) 16.08.89
88 Alberto **GRASSI** (23) 07.03.95
11 Gianni **MUNARI** (35) 24.06.83
65 Giovanni **PINTO** (26) 19.09.91
32 Luca **RIGONI** (33) 07.12.84
21 Matteo **SCOZZARELLA** (30) 05.06.88
93 Mattia **SPROCATI** (25) 28.04.93
5 Leo **STULAC** (Sln) (24) 26.09.94

FORWARDS
72 Emanuele **CALAIO** (36) 08.01.82
9 Fabio **CERAVOLO** (31) 05.03.87
27 **GERVINHO** (IvC) (31) 27.05.87
45 Roberto **INGLESE** (26) 12.11.91
64 Federico **PELLE** (18) 08.01.00
26 Luca **SILIGARDI** (30) 26.01.88

COACH
Roberto **D'AVERSA** (43) 12.08.75

ROMA

GOALKEEPERS
63 Daniel **FUZATO** (Bra) (21) 04.07.97
77 Stefano **GRECO** (19) 21.02.99
83 Antonio **MIRANTE** (35) 08.07.83
1 Robin **OLSEN** (Swe) (28) 08.01.90

DEFENDERS
28 William **BIANDA** (Fra) (18) 30.04.00
20 Federico **FAZIO** (Arg) (31) 17.03.87
5 Juan **JESUS** (Bra) (27) 10.06.91
2 Rick **KARSDORP** (Hol) (23) 11.02.95
11 Aleksandar **KOLAROV** (Ser) (32) 10.11.85
44 Kostas **MANOLAS** (Gre) (27) 14.06.91
15 Ivan **MARCANO** (Spa) (31) 23.06.87
3 Luca **PELLEGRINI** (19) 07.03.99
18 Davide **SANTON** (27) 02.01.91

MIDFIELDERS
19 Ante **CORIC** (Cro) (21) 14.04.97
4 Bryan **CRISTANTE** (23) 03.03.95
16 Daniele **DE ROSSI** (35) 24.07.83
24 Alessandro **FLORENZI** (27) 11.03.91
42 Steven **NZONZI** (Spa) (29) 15.12.88
27 Javier **PASTORE** (Arg) (29) 20.06.89
7 Lorenzo **PELLEGRINI** (22) 19.06.96
17 Cengiz **UNDER** (Tur) (21) 14.07.97
22 Nicolo **ZANIOLO** (19) 02.07.99

FORWARDS
9 Edin **DZEKO** (Bos) (32) 17.03.86
92 Stephan **EL SHAARAWY** (25) 27.10.92
34 Justin **KLUIVERT** (Hol) (19) 05.05.99
8 Diego **PEROTTI** (Arg) (30) 26.07.88
14 Patrik **SCHICK** (CzR) (22) 24.01.96

COACH
Eusebio **DI FRANCESCO** (49) 08.09.69

SAMPDORIA

GOALKEEPERS
1 Emil **AUDERO** (21) 18.01.97
72 Vid **BELEC** (Sln) (28) 06.06.90
33 **RAFAEL** Cabral (Bra) (28) 20.05.90

DEFENDERS
3 Joachim **ANDERSEN** (Den) (22) 31.05.96
24 Bartosz **BERESZYNSKI** (Pol) (26) 12.07.92
15 Omar **COLLEY** (Gam) (25) 24.10.92
25 Alex **FERRARI** (24) 01.07.94
18 Maxime **LEVERBE** (Fra) (21) 15.02.97
29 Nicola **MURRU** (23) 16.12.94
19 Vasco **REGINI** (28) 09.09.90
95 Gabriele **ROLANDO** (23) 02.04.95
7 Jacopo **SALA** (26) 05.12.91
22 Junior **TAVARES** (Bra) (22) 07.08.96
26 Lorenzo **TONELLI** (28) 17.01.90

MIDFIELDERS
8 Edgar **BARRETO** (Par) (34) 15.07.84
6 Albin **EKDAL** (Swe) (29) 28.07.89
14 Jakub **JANKTO** (CzR) (22) 19.01.96
16 Karol **LINETTY** (Pol) (23) 02.02.95
10 Dennis **PRAET** (Blg) (24) 14.05.94
11 Gaston **RAMIREZ** (Uru) (27) 02.12.90
5 Riccardo **SAPONARA** (26) 21.12.91
40 Ognjen **STIJEPOVIC** (Mne) (18) 22.10.99
4 Ronaldo **VIEIRA** (Eng) (20) 19.07.98

FORWARDS
17 Gianluca **CAPRARI** (25) 30.07.93
92 Gregoire **DEFREL** (Fra) (27) 17.06.91
99 Dawid **KOWNACKI** (Pol) (21) 14.03.97
27 Fabio **QUAGLIARELLA** (35) 31.01.83

COACH
Marco **GIAMPAOLO** (51) 02.08.67

SASSUOLO

GOALKEEPERS
47 Andrea **CONSIGLI** (31) 27.01.87
79 Gianluca **PEGOLO** (37) 25.03.81
28 Giacomo **SATALINO** (19) 20.05.99

DEFENDERS
98 Claud **ADJAPONG** (20) 06.05.98
39 Cristian **DELL'ORCO** (24) 10.02.94
38 Stefano **FERRARESI** (18) 16.08.00
31 Gian Marco **FERRARI** (26) 15.02.92
5 Mauricio **LEMOS** (Uru) (22) 28.12.95
21 Pol **LIROLA** (Spa) (21) 13.08.97
23 Giangiacomo **MAGNANI** (23) 04.10.95
2 **MARLON** (Bra) (23) 07.09.95
13 Federico **PELUSO** (34) 20.01.84
6 **ROGERIO** (Bra) (20) 13.01.98
17 Leonardo **SERNICOLA** (21) 30.07.97

MIDFIELDERS
27 Kevin-Prince **BOATENG** (Gha) (31) 06.03.87
20 Jeremie **BOGA** (IvC) (21) 03.01.97
68 Mehdi **BOURABIA** (Mor) (27) 07.08.91
32 Alfred **DUNCAN** (Gha) (25) 10.03.93
9 Filip **DURICIC** (Ser) (26) 30.01.92
73 Manuel **LOCATELLI** (20) 08.01.98
4 Francesco **MAGNANELLI** (33) 12.11.84
12 Stefano **SENSI** (23) 05.08.95

FORWARDS
30 Khouma **BABACAR** (Sen) (25) 17.03.93
25 Domenico **BERARDI** (24) 01.08.94
99 Enrico **BRIGNOLA** (19) 08.07.99
34 Federico **DI FRANCESCO** (24) 14.06.94
10 Alessandro **MATRI** (34) 19.08.84
19 Jens **ODGAARD** (Den) (19) 31.03.99
18 Giacomo **RASPADORI** (18) 18.02.00
29 Marcello **TROTTA** (26) 29.09.92

COACH
Roberto **DE ZERBI** (39) 06.06.79

SPAL

GOALKEEPERS
1 Alfred **GOMIS** (25) 05.09.93
32 Vanja **MILINKOVIC-SAVIC** (Ser) (21) 20.02.97
17 Giacomo **POLUZZI** (30) 25.02.88
22 Demba **THIAM** (Sen) (20) 09.03.98

DEFENDERS
14 Kevin **BONIFAZI** (22) 19.05.96
4 Thiago **CIONEK** (Pol) (32) 21.04.86
33 Filippo **COSTA** (23) 21.05.95
99 Thomas **COULANGE** (17) 01.05.01
24 Lorenzo **DICKMANN** (22) 24.09.96
3 Johan **DJOUROU** (Swi) (31) 18.01.87
93 Mohamed **FARES** (Alg) (22) 15.02.96
27 **FELIPE** (Bra) (34) 31.07.84
5 Lorenco **SIMIC** (Cro) (22) 15.07.96
23 Francesco **VICARI** (24) 03.08.94

MIDFIELDERS
21 Salvatore **ESPOSITO** (17) 07.10.00
25 **EVERTON LUIZ** (Bra) (30) 24.05.88
19 Jasmin **KURTIC** (Sln) (29) 10.01.89
29 Manuel **LAZZARI** (24) 29.11.93
6 Simone **MISSIROLI** (32) 23.05.86
45 Lazar **NIKOLIC** (Ser) (19) 01.08.99
28 Pasquale **SCHIATTARELLA** (31) 30.05.87
16 Mirko **VALDIFIORI** (32) 21.04.86
8 Mattia **VALOTI** (25) 06.09.93
97 Mattia **VITALE** (21) 01.10.97
77 Federico **VIVIANI** (26) 24.03.92

FORWARDS
7 Mirco **ANTENUCCI** (34) 08.09.84
10 Sergio **FLOCCARI** (36) 12.11.81
11 Gabriele **MONCINI** (22) 26.04.96
90 Jacopo **MURANO** (27) 14.02.91
43 Alberto **PALOSCHI** (28) 04.01.90
37 Andrea **PETAGNA** (23) 30.06.95

COACH
Leonardo **SEMPLICI** (51) 19.07.67

TORINO

GOALKEEPERS
1 Salvador **ICHAZO** (Uru) (26) 26.01.92
25 Antonio **ROSATI** (35) 26.06.83
39 Salvatore **SIRIGU** (31) 12.01.87

DEFENDERS
34 Ola **AINA** (Nga) (21) 08.10.96
15 Cristian **ANSALDI** (Arg) (32) 20.09.86
36 **BREMER** (Bra) (21) 18.03.97
29 Lorenzo **DE SILVESTRI** (30) 23.05.88
30 Koffi **DJIDJI** (IvC) (25) 30.11.92
99 Erick **FERIGRA** (Ecu) (19) 07.02.99
5 Armando **IZZO** (26) 02.03.92
3 **LYANCO** (Bra) (21) 01.02.97
24 Emiliano **MORETTI** (37) 11.06.81
33 Nicolas **N'KOULOU** (Cam) (28) 27.03.90

MIDFIELDERS
8 Daniele **BASELLI** (26) 12.03.92
20 Simone **EDERA** (21) 09.01.97
7 Sasa **LUKIC** (Ser) (22) 13.08.96
23 Soualiho **MEITE** (Fra) (24) 17.03.94
27 Vittorio **PARIGINI** (22) 25.03.96
88 Tomas **RINCON** (Ven) (30) 13.01.88
6 Roberto **SORIANO** (27) 08.02.91

FORWARDS
9 Andrea **BELOTTI** (24) 20.12.93
21 Alex **BERENGUER** (Spa) (23) 04.07.95
19 Vitalie **DAMASCAN** (Mol) (19) 24.01.99
14 Iago **FALQUE** (Spa) (28) 04.01.90
11 Simone **ZAZA** (27) 25.06.91

COACH
Walter **MAZZARRI** (57) 01.10.61

UDINESE

GOALKEEPERS
40 Manuel **GASPARINI** (16) 19.05.02
1 Juan **MUSSO** (Arg) (24) 06.05.94
88 **NICOLAS** (Bra) (30) 12.04.88
22 Simone **SCUFFET** (22) 31.05.96

DEFENDERS
17 Bram **NUYTINCK** (Hol) (28) 04.05.90
4 Nicholas **OPOKU** (Gha) (21) 11.08.97
7 Giuseppe **PEZZELLA** (20) 29.11.97
3 **SAMIR** (Bra) (23) 05.12.94
19 Jens **STRYGER LARSEN** (Den) (27) 21.02.91
18 Hidde **TER AVEST** (Hol) (21) 20.05.97
5 William **TROOST-EKONG** (Nga) (25) 01.09.93
2 Molla **WAGUE** (Mli) (27) 21.02.91

MIDFIELDERS
8 Emmanuel **AGYEMANG-BADU** (Gha) (27) 02.12.90
99 Andrija **BALIC** (Cro) (21) 11.08.97
72 Antonin **BARAK** (CzR) (23) 03.12.94
11 Valon **BEHRAMI** (Swi) (33) 19.04.85
98 Mamadou **COULIBALY** (Sen) (19) 03.02.99
77 Marco **D'ALESSANDRO** (27) 17.02.91
10 Rodrigo **DE PAUL** (Arg) (24) 24.05.94
6 Seko **FOFANA** (IvC) (23) 07.05.95
13 Svante **INGELSSON** (Swe) (20) 14.06.98
25 Gaspar **INIGUEZ** (Arg) (24) 26.03.94
38 Rolando **MANDRAGORA** (21) 29.06.97
14 Petar **MICIN** (Ser) (20) 29.09.98
21 Simone **PONTISSO** (21) 20.03.97
23 Ignacio **PUSSETTO** (Arg) (22) 21.12.95

FORWARDS
15 Kevin **LASAGNA** (26) 10.08.92
16 Darwin **MACHIS** (Ven) (25) 07.02.93
91 Lukasz **TEODORCZYK** (Pol) (27) 03.06.91
9 Felipe **VIZEU** (Bra) (21) 12.03.97

COACH
Julio **VELAZQUEZ** (Spa) (37) 05.10.81

(ages as of 05.10.18)

Success...Penarol celebrate drawing 1-1 with Nacional to win the Championship play-off Final in 2010

PENAROL v NACIONAL

The Uruguayan Clasico between the Montevideo neighbours is the world's oldest derby outside the UK

With five Libertadores Cup triumphs, Penarol can rightly claim to be South America's third-most successful club side of all time, behind Boca Juniors and Independiente. And no matter how hard fans of Nacional might try to put their case, the Tricolores' three continental trophies pale in comparison.

However, when it comes to which team dominates domestically, the arguments are never ending...

Founded in 1891, the Central Uruguay Railway Cricket Club were based in the capital's Penarol district and would take the area's name when the football section split in 1913. Nacional, meanwhile, were formed in 1899 following a merger between Uruguay Athletic Club and Montevideo FC.

To date, Nacional have been champions 46 times, while Penarol boast 49 titles. But as any Nacional supporter will point out, five of their rivals' national crowns were won by CURCC – who continued as an amateur side until 1915 and even played against Penarol in 1914.

And it's not just on the pitch where the one-upmanship is all consuming.

In 2011, Penarol followers unveiled what was recognised as the biggest flag ever seen in a football stadium. Not to be outdone, Nacional entered the *Guinness World Records* two years later when they unfurled a flag which measured 600 metres by 50 metres.

Needless to say, further disputes are set to break out all over Montevideo and beyond on October 14 when 2018 Apertura winners Nacional face 2017 defending champions Penarol as this season's Clausura draws to a close. WS

Record...Nacional fans and their flag

CLASSIC ENCOUNTERS

1900 Jul 15
In a first-ever meeting, CURCC beat Nacional 2-0.

1913 Dec 14
Now playing under the name Penarol, their first derby ends in a 2-2 draw.

1949 Oct 9
With Penarol leading 2-0 at half-time, Nacional refuse to come out for the second-half in a game known as the "*Clasico de la fuga*" (escape derby). Nacional claim the no-show was a protest against poor officiating, while Penarol believe it was because they did not want to be thrashed.

2014 Jan 20
Nacional win 1-0 in a game that sees four red cards and a post-match brawl that ends with 11 players spending the night in jail. Oh, and it was a friendly...

2018 Apr 22
A 1-1 draw means Penarol still lead the head-to-head record in league games, having won 92 times and suffered 80 defeats.

Latest...Penarol's Agustin Canobbio (left) and Jorge Fucile of Nacional

ON BOTH SIDES

JOSE LEANDRO ANDRADE
● 1924-30
● 1931-35

WILLIAM MARTINEZ
● 1943-46
● 1955-62

LUIS CUBILLA
● 1957-62; (coach) 1981
● 1969-74

ALFONSO DOMINGUEZ
● 1985-91
● 1994-97

LUIS AGUIAR
● 2011, 2011-12, 2013-16
● 2018-present

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE NOVEMBER 2

GET KITTED OUT

15 t-shirt colours · XS youth to 3XL
Hoodies · Baby grows · Mugs · Pin badges
Request service · Worldwide shipping

www.cultzeros.co.uk